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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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SIR begins in 12 states & UTs amid opposition

Glitches mar the exercise as Kerala calls all-party meet

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 4 NOV

Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voters' list commenced in nine states and three Union territories on Tuesday, amid objections from several parties.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee led an anti-SIR march in Kolkata while the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu rallied its supporters and Kerala called for an all-party meet.

The DMK and its allies had approached the Supreme Court on Monday, challenging the "de facto NRC" on several grounds.

In Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has called for an all-party meeting online on Wednesday to seek consensus on the implementation of the SIR. Most political parties in the state -- barring the BJP -- have raised concerns over its timing.

"If a single eligible voter is removed from the electoral rolls, we will ensure the fall of this BJP government," Banerjee vowed at a rally.

Over 80,000 booth-level officers (BLOs) visited homes to distribute enumeration forms in West Bengal, kicking off a politically sensitive exercise. Yet, there were numerous reports of technical glitches as teachers struggled to balance their assignment with classroom duties.

The SIR will begin with the enumeration stage and continue till 4 December.

The EC will release the draft electoral rolls on 9 December, and the final electoral rolls will be published on 7 February.

The 12 states and UTs where the second round of SIR will be conducted are the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Among these, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and West Bengal will go to polls in 2026.

The massive exercise will cover nearly 51 crore electors across 321 districts and 1,843 assembly constituencies of these nine states and three UTs. *—PTI*

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People from different faiths hold hands during West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's march against the SIR process, in Kolkata on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

> **They say they will expel Bangladeshis and Rohingyas. How many Rohingyas did they find in Bihar after SIR? Just speaking Bengali doesn't make someone a Bangladeshi. Speaking Urdu doesn't make someone a Pakistani**
>
> —Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal Chief Minister

As campaigning ends, Tejashwi makes new promises to farmers

PATNA, 4 NOV

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday announced that farmers would be given Rs 300 per quintal of paddy and Rs 400 for wheat as a bonus over MSP, if the INDIA bloc comes to power in Bihar.

The chief ministerial candidate of the Opposition bloc, said heads of all Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) and Primary Marketing Cooperative Societies (Vyapar Mandals) will also be given the "status of people's representatives" in the state, if the INDIA bloc wins. There are more than 8,400 PACS in the state.

Additionally, farmers in Bihar will be provided free electricity for irrigation purposes, he said.

PACS and Vyapar Mandals are the agencies for food procurement in the rural areas.

"We have already promised that we will transfer Rs 2,500 each into the bank accounts of women every month under the 'Mai-Bahan' scheme. Now we have decided that Rs 30,000 will be transferred in advance (of the entire year) to the accounts of all women in the state under the 'Mai-Bahan scheme' on the occasion of 'Makkar Sankranti' on 14 January next year," the RJD leader said.

The announcements come two days ahead of the first phase of voting on 6 November and on the final day of campaigning. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

- PM Modi spearheaded the NDA rallies in Bihar, sharing the stage with JD(U) leader and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as they closed off campaigning

No victory parade for World Cup winning women

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

No victory parade has been scheduled so far for the Indian women's cricket team after its historic first ICC Women's World Cup triumph on Sunday, when Harmanpreet Kaur's side defeated South Africa by 52 runs in Navi Mumbai. Unlike the men's team, which received an open-top bus parade in Mumbai last year, the BCCI has postponed celebrations as senior officials are attending ICC meetings in Dubai from 4–7 November. The players will, however, meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. The delay comes after the 4 June Bengaluru stampede during RCB's victory celebrations, which killed 11 people. *—Agencies*

No cancellation fee on flight tickets within 48 hrs?

NEW DELHI, 3 NOV

Air passengers may soon be able to cancel or amend tickets without extra charges within 48 hours of booking, under draft rules issued by the DGCA. The regulator has proposed a mandatory "look-in" option, excluding flights departing within five days (domestic) or 15 days (international). Airlines must also correct name errors within 24 hours at no additional cost for tickets booked directly on their websites. Refund responsibility for tickets booked through travel agents will rest with airlines, which must process refunds within 21 working days. Carriers may also offer refunds or credit shells for cancellations due to medical emergencies. *—PTI*

Dancer checking his car killed by truck in the City

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

A 36-year-old dancer, who had appeared in several reality shows, died after a truck allegedly rammed into his car that was parked on the roadside of a highway on the outskirts of the city on Tuesday morning, police said. The deceased was Sudheendra. The incident, which occurred near Pemmanahalli in Nelamangala taluk. The CCTV footage showed the car parked on the roadside with Sudheendra standing beside it. His newly purchased vehicle had developed issues when he was driving to his brother's house, police said. The truck driver then veered off the road and crashed into the vehicle. The absconding driver had allegedly dozed off. *—PTI*

Darshan's friend Pavithra moves SC in murder case

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Actor Pavithra Gowda has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court challenging its 14 August decision cancelling the bail granted to her in the Renukaswamy murder case. The plea will be heard on Thursday by a bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan. The Supreme Court had set aside the Karnataka High Court's December 2024 order granting bail to Gowda, actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and five others, holding that the High Court overlooked serious evidence. The court also noted allegations that Darshan attempted to interfere with the investigation, including arranging false surrenders and influencing police procedures. *—ANI*

Indian student visas face 74% rejection in Canada

OTTAWA, 4 NOV

Canada's sweeping restrictions on international student permits have sharply reduced approvals for Indian applicants, government data show, with rejection rates and scrutiny at unprecedented levels. In August 2025, around 74 per cent of study permit applications from India were refused, compared with 32 per cent a year earlier. Overall refusals stood at nearly 40 per cent, while 24 per cent of Chinese applications were rejected. Indian applications plunged from 20,900 in August 2023 to 4,515 in August 2025, according to CTV News and Reuters.

The crackdown follows heightened fraud detection efforts after authorities uncovered 1,550 fake acceptance letters, mostly linked to India, in 2023. Last year, over 14,000 documents were flagged as potentially fraudulent. Canada has since tightened verification procedures and raised financial requirements. Processing times for temporary visas from India have also slowed significantly due to enhanced checks.

Diplomatic tensions between India and Canada continue to cast a shadow, though both nations have taken steps to stabilise ties, including appointing new high commissioners in August.

Universities such as Waterloo, Regina and Saskatchewan report steep declines in Indian enrolments, while consultants say applicants must now prove financial and academic credibility "beyond what's on paper". Ottawa is also considering new powers under Bill C-12 to cancel groups of temporary visas over fraud concerns, with India and Bangladesh identified internally as "country-specific challenges". *—ANI*

A passenger train rammed into the back of a goods train which was heading in the same direction, near Bilaspur railway station in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

8 dead as trains collide in Chh'garh

BILASPUR, 4 NOV

At least eight people were killed and 14 others injured after a passenger train collided with a goods train near Bilaspur station in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, railway officials said. The passenger train rammed into a goods train from behind. Both the trains were moving in the same direction.

The incident took place around 4pm when the main-line electric multiple unit (MEMU) passenger train was heading to Bilaspur from Gevra, they said.

"Eight deaths have been confirmed in the accident. Four others are still trapped inside the wreckage and efforts are on to evacuate them," Bilaspur Collector Sanjay Agrawal said.

The injured passengers have been shifted to Apollo Hospital and Chhattisgarh Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS) hospital in Bilaspur. The condition of one of them is said to be critical, he added.

Railway authorities announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to kin of the deceased and Rs 5 lakh to the seriously injured persons, while those who sustained minor injuries will receive Rs 1 lakh assistance, an official statement said.

A detailed inquiry into the incident will be conducted at the level soon.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed grief over the accident and said that the state government stands in full solidarity with the affected families. *—PTI*

India, Israel sign defence MoU

NEW DELHI/TEL AVIV, 4 NOV

India and Israel on Tuesday strengthened their strategic partnership with the signing of a new Defence Cooperation MoU at the 17th Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in Tel Aviv. India and Israel will collaborate for advanced technology sharing, co-development, co-production, AI, cyber security, R&D and defence industrial cooperation.

The talks coincided with the visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, who described India as a "global superpower" and said Israel seeks a long-term strategic partnership.

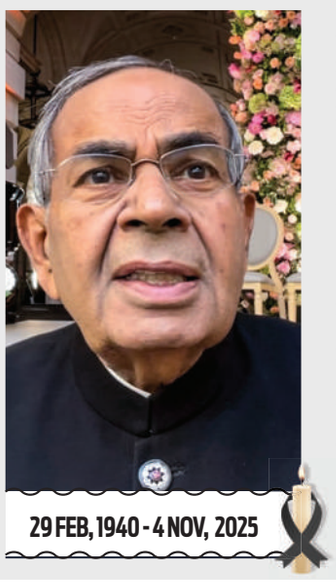
In his meeting with Sa'ar, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India and Israel "face a particular challenge from terrorism" and backed Trump's Gaza peace plan.

"The MoU will enable the sharing of advanced technology and would promote co-development and co-production," the ministry said in statement. *—PTI*

TRADE ICON

Hinduja chairman Gopichand dies at 86

LONDON, 4 NOV



Gopichand P Hinduja, who acquired struggling truck-maker Ashok Leyland and quickly turned it around into one of India's most successful automobile companies, died in London at the age of 85.

The billionaire patriarch of Britain's richest family and chairman of the globe-spanning Hinduja Group conglomerate was unwell for the past few weeks and died in a London hospital, sources close to his family said.

Born in 1940, Gopichand was the second of the four Hinduja brothers who built the group into a global conglomerate, spanning automotive, energy, banking, and infrastructure.

After the death of his elder brother Srichand Hinduja in 2023, he took charge as the chairman of the 35 billion pound Hinduja Group.

He is survived by his wife, Sunita, sons Sanjay and Dheeraj, and daughter, Rita.

A graduate of Jai Hind College, Mumbai (1959), Gopichand began his career in the family's trading business in Tehran before expanding its reach across continents.

Under his leadership, the group acquired Gulf Oil in 1984, closely followed by the acquisition of the then-struggling Indian automotive manufacturer, Ashok Leyland, in 1987, which was the first major NRI investment in India.

He was also the visionary behind the Group's forays into power and infrastructure sectors, spearheading the task of shaping the conglomerate's plan for building multi-GW energy generation capacity in India.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu termed Gopichand P Hinduja as "a visionary industrialist", who was "instrumental in transforming the Group into a truly global conglomerate".

Gopichand Hinduja and his family retained their position as Britain's wealthiest, according to the latest The Sunday Times Rich List, despite a drop in their overall fortune. The family's net worth stands at 35.3 billion pounds. *—PTI*

BAGALKOT CONGRESS MLA HY METI DIES AT 79

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

Karnataka Congress MLA from Bagalkot HY Meti died at a private hospital in the City on Tuesday. He was 79 and was undergoing treatment for breathing issues and other age-related ailments, sources said.

Meti, who was chairman for Bagalkote Urban Development Authority, is survived by two sons and two daughters.

In 1989, 1994 and 2004, Meti represented Guledgudda Assembly constituency as a Janata Dal member. He won in 2013 and served as Excise Minister in the then Siddaramiah-led Congress government but lost in 2018.

He was among the close associates of Chief Minister Siddaramiah.

Expressing grief, the CM said, "Meti, who was in public life for a long time, was a politician who was pro-people."

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday said that the release of his book 'Neerina Hejje' scheduled for Wednesday has been postponed.

—Salar with Agencies

PHOTO: PTI

Yaduveer opposes CM's plans to 'develop' Mysuru

MYSURU, 4 OCT

Mysuru MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar hit back at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's plan to expand and develop Mysuru city. Siddaramaiah on Monday chaired the first meeting Greater Mysuru on Monday and told officials to develop a scientific plan to modernise the city while suggesting a new ring road, among other such expansions. Yaduveer said on Tuesday that he had written to the Chief Minister over the proposed flyovers on Vinoba Road and Jhansi Rani Lakshmibai Road. "The proposals have no publicly available traffic study or citizen consultation," the BJP MP said. "Hundreds of mature trees may be felled." He appealed to Siddaramaiah to instead focus on public transport and accessibility and aim "to build a modern Mysuru without losing its grace".—*Salar News*

Mandya farmer electrocuted while peeling coconuts

MANDYA, 4 NOV

In a shocking incident, a farmer tragically lost his life due to electrocution while attempting to remove coconut fronds in Sagya Village, Mandya district of the State. According to Mandya Superintendent of Police, Mallikarjun Baladandi, the deceased, identified as Ramesh, aged 38, inadvertently made contact with 11kV power lines, likely while using a long pole. "Ramesh died on the spot," Baladandi confirmed. The local police, responding to the incident, discovered Ramesh's body entangled in the wires beside the road. Authorities in the district have launched a further investigation into the circumstances surrounding this unfortunate event. —*PTI*

Govt, Walmart Vriddhi tie up to develop SHG

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

The National Livelihood Mission (NLM) under the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood has partnered with Walmart Vriddhi to strengthen the digital capabilities of self-help groups (SHGs) across the State. Under the three-year collaboration, Walmart, through its partner, Ideas to Impact Foundation, will provide free digital learning resources, business tools, and mentorship to SHGs to modernise and connect with Flipkart and Walmart Marketplace. The MoU, initiated by Minister Dr Sharanaprakash R Patil and Dr Shalini Rajneesh, was signed by NLM Director R Snehal and Parul Soni of i2i Foundation. Dr Shalini announced a SHG products centre at Kempegowda Airport. —*Salar News*

Bengaluru joins global effort to fight rising heat

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Mumbai have joined a global coalition of 33 cities under the Cool Cities Accelerator, a new C40 Cities initiative supported by The Rockefeller Foundation, aimed at redesigning urban spaces and protecting residents from extreme heat. Announced at the C40 World Mayors Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Accelerator commits member cities to concrete heat-resilience actions by 2030. Extreme heat is now the world's deadliest weather hazard. Under the plan, cities will strengthen leadership, early warning systems and emergency cooling access within two years, and improve building standards, tree cover and infrastructure resilience within five. The Rockefeller Foundation is providing a USD 1 million grant for heat-adaptation targets and technical support. —*PTI*

Farmers protest brings Belagavi to a halt

Athani shuts down as sugarcane farmers' stir enters Day 6; They want MSP of ₹3,500/tonnne

BELAGAVI, 4 NOV

Thousands of sugarcane farmers protested in Belagavi district on Tuesday as their movement entered its sixth day.

The town of Athani observing a complete shutdown in solidarity as protests stretched across Raibag, Athani, and Mudalagi taluks, demanding immediate resolution of their grievances. All the business establishments in Mudalagi were shut.

Farmers demanded a minimum support price of Rs 3,500 per ton for their produce has gathered momentum.

Under the banner of the Hasiru Sene Farmers Association, they farmers rejected the Rs 3,200 per ton offer from sugar mills. The agitation brought the operations of 26 sugar factories across the region to a halt, with protesters vowing not to settle for anything less than their demand.

The agitation brought the operations of 26 sugar factories across the region to a halt, with protesters vowing not to settle for anything less than their demand **PHOTO: SALAR**

Over 25,000 farmers from the Kittur Karnataka region supply cane to Kolhapur-based mills, resulting in a loss of tax revenue for Karnataka. The protest will continue until the demands are met, the farmers warned.

Protesting farmers have urged the State government to adopt the Maharashtra sugar payment model, which they say ensures structured and timely payments for cane growers.

Farmer leader Chunnappa Poojeri stated that sugar mills in Karnataka pay Rs 2,900-Rs 3,050 per tonne, while mills in Maharashtra pay Rs 3,400-Rs 3,500 per tonne. He demanded that mills in Karnataka pay at least Rs 4,000 per tonne and ensure timely payments.

In Gokak town, the agitation took a new turn as students joined farmers in staging roadblocks at key intersections, throwing traffic out of gear on major routes connecting Belagavi, Savadatti, Mudalagi and Yaragatti.

BJP State President BY Vijayendra visited the protest site, extending his party's support to the farmers.

"Sugarcane farmers are protesting on the streets due to the Congress government's indifferent attitude," the Shikaripura MLA said.

The State government makes a profit of Rs 56,000 crore from the six million tonnes of sugar produced from sugarcane, he said. Apart from sugar, the State also earns from its byproducts such as molasses, ethanol and biogas.

"If the State earns Rs 56,000 crore, then the State government has some duty. If it is not coming forward to listen to the woes of the people, this shows how concerned this Congress government is with farmers," he lambasted.

The protests, which initially began with the demands for State Advisory Price (SAP) for sugarcane, have now gained momentum.

The agitation has caused significant economic disruption, with thousands of commuters affected by road blockades.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Tunnel road for rich? Tejasvi has 10 questions for DKS

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya posed 10 questions to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on the proposed tunnel road project on Tuesday. The MP has been spearheading the BJP's opposition against the project.

In an open letter, he noted that two wheelers and autos are not allowed on proposed road.

"Is the tunnel meant only for cars and those who can afford the Rs 660 two-way toll?" he wrote.

He said that as of August end, private cars constituted only 19 per cent of the total vehicles in the City.

"Should the State's policies focus on catering to this small percentage or to the larger commuting population?" he asked.

Studies by IISc have said the tunnel road is estimated to carry only 1,800 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD), while the Metro carries around 69,000 PPHPD, he said.

"What, then, is the rationale behind prioritising a project with 40 times lower efficiency than the Metro?" Surya wrote.

The MP noted that the Detailed Project Report of the tunnel road itself mentions 22 choke points.

"Does this not defeat the very purpose of building the tunnel?" he blasted.

He noted that the tunnel was set to pass under key environmental hotspots such as Lalbagh and Hebbal Lake.

"Why has no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study been conducted?" he fumed.

He asked what measures had been taken to address concerns raised by Urban Development Department of the State Government including a lack of studies and soil data.

Additionally, Surya noted that the DPR itself said that the road would save only 13 minutes in 2031.

"Given that vehicle ownership is increasing every year, travel time is expected to increase. What, then, is the basis of the claim?" he questioned.

He also questioned whether the timeline of 50 months would be met and questioned how the project was feasible in terms of cost when the Yellow Line Metro was built Rs 7,610 crore – roughly the same cost of the tunnel road.

Finally, he asked why the tunnel road would be increasing the distance between the two points it connected. —*Salar News*

HC reserves verdict as RSS takes out march in Yadgir

BENGALURU/ YADGIR, 4 NOV

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the state government's appeal challenging a single-judge order that stayed its 18 October directive requiring prior permission for private organisations to hold activities in government-owned spaces. The single judge had held the order prima facie infringed fundamental rights. Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty argued it merely regulated encroachment, but the bench questioned whether it could apply to citizens walking together. The respondent NGO said the order arbitrarily criminalised routine activities.

Meanwhile, in Yadgir's Kembhavi town, an RSS path march was held with conditional permission, heavy police deployment and public participation. However, the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (DSS) accused the district administration of denying its own Bhima procession request. Minister Sharanabasappa Gowda Darshanapura said separate dates were fixed to avoid public inconvenience.

—*Salar News*

Tejasvi finds flaw in Metro fare hike

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Tuesday raised concerns regarding the "exorbitant" fare hike by the BMRCL.

The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) had hiked the fare in February by almost 125 per cent and revised it after receiving a severe backlash a week after the increase.

Surya pointed out "a major calculation error" in determining the base year for maintenance and administrative costs, which forms the foundation of the Fare Fixation Committee's report.

"Instead of considering the Maintenance and Administration cost of 2017-18, the BMRCL, while requesting for the hike before the FFC, calculated the M&A Cost pertaining to 2016-17," Surya said in a statement.

This incorrect computation has led to an unjustified increase in fares, resulting in commuters paying an estimated Rs 150 crore in excess since the fare revision, he claimed.

"Even though the average fare increase remained 51.5 per cent, the most common journeys undertaken by commuters (falling in the 8-15 km slab) have seen an unjustified hike close to 70 per cent," the MP stated. —*PTI*

Man held for stalking TV actress in B'luru

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

- According to cops, the actress had been receiving lewd messages for three months from a Facebook user named "Naveenz".

A man has been arrested in Bengaluru for allegedly stalking and sexually harassing a television actress by sending her vulgar messages and obscene videos on social media, police said on Tuesday.

The accused, **Naveen K,** worked as a delivery manager at a company in Whitefield. According to police, the actress had been receiving lewd messages for the past three months from a Facebook user named "Naveenz". Although she ignored his friend request, he continued to send her offensive messages through Messenger.

After she blocked him, Naveen allegedly created multiple fake accounts and sent her obscene videos, including clips of his private parts. Despite repeated warnings, the harassment persisted.

On 1 November, after he messaged her again, the actress asked him to meet her at a restaurant in the city. When she confronted him and demanded that he stop, he allegedly spoke to her rudely and ignored her warnings. She then alerted the police, who arrived at the scene and arrested him. —*PTI*

'Firms must give 3 day leave for Bihar polls'

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has appealed to employers across the State to grant paid leave to workers from Bihar so they can return home to vote in the upcoming Assembly elections.

In a statement released by his office on Tuesday, Shivakumar noted that a large number of Bihari residents are employed in Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka. He urged companies, contractors, hoteliers, builders and shop owners to extend at least three days of paid leave to enable these workers to participate in the democratic process.

Polling for the Bihar Assembly will take place in two phases, on 6 and 11 November. Asked if he would arrange special trains to Bihar during elections, he said, "I don't want to interfere in Union government's jurisdiction." —*Salar News*

MAIL FROM THE PAST

In an age where letters are nearly forgotten, a man dressed as a postbox and another as a postman engaged with students at the District-Level Philatelic Exhibition at Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Old stamps and other postal artefacts on were kept on display too **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

UNVEILS FACT-FINDING REPORT

Patkar flags eco risks in Honnavar port

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

A fact-finding report released in Bengaluru by activist Medha Patkar has warned that the Honnavar private port project at Kasarkod poses grave ecological, livelihood, and human rights threats. Developed by Honnavar Ports Private Ltd (HPPL), a subsidiary of GVPR Engineers Ltd, the 44-hectare project spans five fishing villages and includes a 4-km road connecting to NH66, cutting through ecologically sensitive coastal terrain.

Prepared by AICCTU, Fridays for Future–Karnataka, and PUCL-K, the report accuses HPPL of proceeding without community consent or adequate environmental safeguards, calling the process opaque, arbitrary, and exclusionary. It documents police violence on 24 February when thousands of fisherfolk held a peaceful sit-in. Over 100 were detained, several women collapsed from exhaustion, and around 50 protesters entered the sea in distress. The next day, prohibitory orders were imposed, and 24 protest leaders were jailed for 24 days, sparking a week-long strike across the coastal belt.

Activist Medha Patkar speaks out against the Honnavar port project while releasing a report in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

The report warns that the port's breakwaters will block sediment flow, intensify erosion, and endanger the Sharavathi estuary—home to Olive Ridley turtles, mangrove forests, and key fish species. Activists allege flawed environmental impact assessments and note HPPL was exempted from public hearings and meaningful local consultations.

Over 6,000 families depend on fishing in the region. Many dry fish workers, mostly women, lost access to traditional coastal land handed to HPPL in 2019.

Only 18 of 113 road-affected households have ownership titles, leaving several at risk of repeat displacement and income loss.The report urges withdrawal of police cases, accountability for excesses, and immediate revocation of the project's environmental clearances. —*Salar News*

State gets NHRC over dad's viral bribery post

BENGALURU, 4 NOV

The NHRC on Tuesday said it has issued a notice to the Karnataka government and the State's police Chief over reports that an old man was allegedly made to give bribe to an ambulance driver, police, crematorium staff and civic officials after the death of his only daughter in the City.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in a statement, has observed that the content of the news report, if true, raise serious issues of violation of human rights.

The NHRC has taken "suo motu cognisance of a media report that while mourning the death of his only daughter, a grieving 64-year-old father **Shivakumar K** was made to pay bribes at every step, including an ambulance driver, police, crematorium staff and civic officials in Bengaluru," the statement read.

Reportedly, an IIT-Madras and IIM-Ahmedabad graduate woman working in the City suffered a brain haemorrhage on September 18.

When the father called an ambulance after the death of his daughter, the ambulance driver allegedly "apparently overcharged for the services," it said.

When he reported his daughter's death to the police, they not only "displayed a lack of empathy," but gave copies of the FIR and post-mortem report only allegedly after a bribe was paid, the statement said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: AIRINDIA

AI to bring back 228 passengers from Mongolia

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Air India will operate a relief flight on Tuesday to bring back 228 passengers who are stranded in Ulaanbaatar after their San Francisco-Delhi flight was diverted to the Mongolian capital on Monday due to a technical issue. The flight will return with the passengers on Wednesday morning, the airline said. There were 245 people in the plane, including 17 crew members. The relief flight will be operated with a Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft. The statement also said the airline, along with local authorities and the Indian Embassy in Mongolia, has been looking after the passengers and crew. The Boeing 777 aircraft, which operated the flight, had landed safely at Ulaanbaatar. *—PTI*

Delhi HC rejects defamation case against Arnab

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday set aside the summons issued to TV journalist Arnab Goswami in a criminal defamation complaint filed by an advocate for allegedly making defamatory remarks on a news channel in 2016. Justice Neena Bansal Krishna also quashed the criminal complaint against Goswami and two former officials of the TV channel, Shrijeet Mishra and Samir Jain. Summons against them as well were also set aside by the court. The alleged remarks were made during the broadcast of a programme relating to the violence that took place at the Patiala House court, following the 2016 Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) incident where anti-India slogans were allegedly raised. *—PTI*

M'rashtra set 18 Nov deadline for Ladki Bahin e-KYC

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

The Maharashtra government has asked beneficiaries of the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme to complete the mandatory e-KYC by 18 November. State Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare said that the honorarium for October will be disbursed from Wednesday, and the amount will be credited directly into the Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of all eligible women beneficiaries. The state government's flagship scheme, launched in July last year, provides monthly assistance of Rs 1,500 to women in the 21-65 age group, whose annual family income is less than Rs 2.5 lakh. The government made e-KYC mandatory for the scheme in September, giving beneficiaries two months to complete the process and issued a government resolution regarding this. *—PTI*

M'rashtra Cabinet takes 21 decisions in one day

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

With elections to local bodies looming, the Maharashtra Cabinet took 21 decisions on Tuesday, an unusual number for a single meeting, including the closure of the state's asset reconstruction company, MAHA ARC Limited. According to an official statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, the Finance Department's proposal to wind up MAHA ARC Ltd was approved in the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Additionally, the State Election Commission (SEC) will adopt the voters' list of the assembly elections for civic polls, the Bombay HC was told on Tuesday, while hearing a plea by an 18-year-old woman who claimed her application to enrol as a voter after she turned 18 in April 2025 was not accepted. *—PTI*

Didi hits the street as SIR commences in Bengal

She warns of Modi govt's fall if one eligible voter struck off rolls

KOLKATA, 4 NOV

A booth level officer (BLO) explains the details of enumeration form to a voter as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls begins in Kolkata, West Bengal, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

West Bengal on Tuesday launched its first Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 23 years, sparking a political storm as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the Election Commission (EC) and BJP of using the process as a "political tool" for "silent, invisible rigging" ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls.

The month-long house-to-house verification drive covers nearly 10 crore voters and involves over 80,000 booth-level officers (BLOs). It began with the distribution of over 18 lakh enumeration forms. Officials said the process was largely peaceful, though online glitches delayed form distribution in several areas. Many schoolteachers assigned as BLOs also struggled to manage classroom duties, prompting complaints from teachers' unions.

Leading a massive rally from Dharmatala to Jorasanko, the ancestral home of Rabindranath Tagore, Banerjee alleged that the EC, acting at the BJP's behest, was deleting genuine voters in Opposition-ruled states. "If even one genuine voter's name is struck off, the fall of the Modi government will be inevitable," she said.

> **People of West Bengal are being branded as Bangladeshis because they work in other states. These illiterates (BJP) know nothing about our history of Independence. Once, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh had been one. After Independence, people went wherever life took them** -Mamata Banerjee, WB CM

Banerjee questioned the EC's timeline, recalling that the 2002 revision took two years. Taking a swipe at Chief EC Gyanesh Kumar, whom she called "kursi babu," she asked, "How can you cover 10 crore people and collect forms in three months for four poll-bound states?"

She alleged that the EC aimed to delete nearly two crore voters, particularly minorities and Matuas, and accused the BSF of intimidating border residents. "Several deaths have occurred due to panic and misinformation over this SIR," she claimed.

The Trinamool Congress has set up voter assistance camps and helplines across districts, advising people not to share documents with impersonators. Banerjee also alleged that BJP workers, posing as bank employees, were collecting voter data in Diamond Harbour, represented by her nephew Abhishek Banerjee. "I was born at home, not in a hospital. I've been an MP seven times and CM thrice. Do I still need to prove my citizenship?" she asked. *—PTI*

Alangulam MLA Manoj Pandian joined the ruling DMK in the presence of Chief Minister MK Stalin *PHOTO: PTI*

OPS loyalist Manoj Pandian joins DMK

CHENNAI, 4 NOV

- Pandian accused the AIADMK of discarding the ideology of its founder, claiming it was like "a branch of the BJP in Tamil Nadu"

PH Manoj Pandian, expelled AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam's loyalist and the MLA from Alangulam in Tenkasi district, joined the ruling DMK on Tuesday in the presence of Chief Minister MK Stalin at Anna Arivalayam.

A long-time supporter of Panneerselvam following their ouster by the AIADMK general council in July, 2022, Pandian has been with the party since 1993. He earlier served as joint secretary of the AIADMK's advocates' wing and was also an MP. Minutes after joining the DMK, he announced that he would resign from his MLA post.

Pandian accused the AIADMK of discarding the ideology of its founder MG Ramachandran and claimed it was functioning like "a branch of the BJP in Tamil Nadu".

The party, he said, no longer resembled the organisation once led by MGR and J Jayalalithaa.

His switch follows that of former state minister Anwhar Raajhaa, who joined the DMK in July over similar concerns regarding the AIADMK's leadership and its proximity to the BJP.

Pandian, son of former Assembly Speaker PH Pandian, said he chose the DMK after considering Stalin's "firm leadership, commitment to Dravidian principles, social justice and inclusive governance". *—PTI*

Army controlled by 10% elites: Rahul's fresh jab

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Bihar party president Rajesh Ram being garlanded during a rally at Pakaha in Aurangabad *PHOTO: PTI*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday courted controversy during his campaign in Bihar's Aurangabad, alleging that the corporate sector, bureaucracy, judiciary and even the Indian Army are 'under the control of 10 per cent of the nation's population,' a reference to upper castes.

He said the remaining 90 per cent, backward classes, Dalits, tribals and minorities, are excluded from decision-making and opportunities.

Calling for a national caste census, Gandhi said it would help identify marginalised communities 'sitting outside the system' and ensure their constitutional rights. "If 90 per cent people don't have participatory rights, the Constitution cannot be protected," he said.

Continuing his attack on PM Narendra Modi, Gandhi accused him of keeping youth 'addicted to social media reels' to distract them from unemployment, poor education and collapsing healthcare. "Modi wants you busy on Instagram and Facebook so you don't question him," he said.

The Congress leader also accused the BJP-led NDA of 'vote theft' in Bihar, claiming the INDIA bloc would form a government representing the socially marginalised if elected. He promised to revive Bihar's historical glory by establishing a modern university in Nalanda and developing the state into a manufacturing hub. In another sharp dig, Gandhi alleged the PM 'possesses a fake degree,' claiming his indifference towards education stems from it.

Gandhi's remarks highlight its campaign for social justice. *—Agencies*

NDA will break records & crush jungle raj: PM

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a rally ahead of the Bihar Assemby elections, in East Champaran *PHOTO: PTI*

Top BJP leaders on Tuesday intensified their Bihar campaign, invoking development, security, and the spectre of 'jungle raj' to rally support for the NDA ahead of the two-phase Assembly polls.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed voters had made up their minds to ensure the NDA's biggest win in two decades, asserting that 'jungle raj people' would face their worst defeat.

Interacting with women BJP workers, he praised their "Mera Booth, Sabse Mazboot" resolve and urged higher voter turnout, saying enthusiasm was palpable among Dalits, backward classes, and women.

Home Minister Amit Shah accused the RJD-Congress alliance of pushing Bihar back into lawlessness during its rule. "Murders, loot and extortion will return if you err on polling day," he warned. Promising a Rs 26,000-crore Koshi river project and AIIMS-Darbhanga, he said NDA rule meant development, not jungle raj.

Shah also vowed to wipe out Naxalism by March 2026 and warned Pakistan-backed terrorists of a "goli ka jawab goley se" (cannon for bullet) response, using weapons "made in Bihar".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh defended Nitish Kumar's integrity, saying no corruption case had ever been proven against him. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, meanwhile, courted controversy by targeting RJD's Osama Shahab, likening him to Osama bin Laden and calling his victory a 'defeat for Hindus.'

The people of Bihar will votes on 6 and 11 November; results will be declared on 14 November. *—PTI*

FIR against Minister 'Lalan' over poll jibe

An FIR has been registered against Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' for allegedly making an inflammatory remark during campaigning for JD(U) candidate Anant Singh in Bihar's Mokama, the Patna district administration said on Tuesday. A purported video shows the former JD(U) president urging supporters to prevent opposition voters from stepping out on polling day. "There are some people out here whom you must not allow to venture out. Lock them up inside their homes," Lalan is heard saying in Magahi. *—PTI*

NE parties join hands for single political entity

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Leaders from three Northeast-based parties, including Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP president Conrad Sangma, announced on Tuesday that they will merge to form a single political entity within 45 days to collectively raise regional issues at the national level.

The announcement was made through a joint statement signed by Pradyot Manikya of TIPRA Motha, Daniel Langthasa of the People's Party, Assam, and former BJP spokesperson Mmhonlumo Kikon, who will serve as member secretary of a nine-member committee tasked with finalising the new formation's structure.

Both NPP and TIPRA Motha are BJP allies, though other BJP partners in the region, Mizoram's ZPM, Nagaland's NDPP and Assam's AGP, are not part of the initiative.

Sangma said the committee would also reach out to other regional parties, noting that the effort is driven by the conviction that the people of the Northeast "need to be heard and represented". He emphasised that the proposed platform is not aimed at confronting the BJP. *—PTI*

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy, Congress leader & ex-cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin and Governor Jishnu Dev Verma, in Hyderabad *PHOTO: PTI*

Azhar is Minorities Welfare Minister

HYDERABAD, 4 NOV

Former Indian cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin, recently inducted into the Telangana Council of Ministers, was on Tuesday allocated the Minorities Welfare and Public Enterprises portfolios. The order was issued by Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao.

The Public Enterprises portfolio was previously held by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, while Minorities Welfare was handled by Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar.

Azharuddin was sworn in as a minister on 31 October, bringing the cabinet strength to 16. Telangana can have up to 18 ministers based on Assembly numbers.

His induction is viewed as strategically significant for the Congress as it contests the 11 November Jubilee Hills bypoll, where over one lakh Muslim voters are expected to play a key role. The seat fell vacant following the death of BRS MLA Maganti Gopinath in June.

He was nominated to the Legislative Council under the Governor's quota in August, though Governor Jishnu Dev Varma has yet to approve the appointment. He had unsuccessfully contested the Jubilee Hills seat in 2023. *—PTI*

OUTSOURCING SHOCK

US's HIRE Bill could 'light fire' in Indian economy: Cong

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The Congress on Tuesday said a US Senate bill proposing a 25 per cent tax on outsourcing payments by American firms could "light a fire in the Indian economy" if enacted.

Congress communications in-charge **Jairam Ramesh** said the Halting International Relocation of Employment (HIRE) Act, introduced on 6 October by Ohio Senator Bernie Moreno, reflects a growing sentiment in the US that while blue-collar jobs were "lost" to China, white-collar jobs should not be "lost to India."

The bill, referred to the Senate Committee on Finance, seeks to impose a 25 per cent tax on any US entity making outsourcing payments to foreign persons for work benefiting American consumers. Ramesh said such a move would directly hit India's IT services, BPOs, consulting firms, and global capability centres, a key driver of India's service exports for over two decades.

He noted that other countries like Ireland, Israel, and the Philippines would also be affected, but the impact would be most severe on India, whose technology exports underpin its economic relationship with the US.

"The Bill may or may not pass, or it could linger," Ramesh said on X, adding that its introduction alone signals shifting attitudes in Washington towards global outsourcing.

"Few expected a year ago that the India-US economic relationship would face so many knocks, the HIRE Bill is yet another reflection. If it becomes a reality, it could reshape India's economic ties with the US," Ramesh warned. *—PTI*

'Vijayan will be LDF's CM face in 2026'

T'PURAM, 4 NOV

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will be the Left Democratic Front's chief ministerial candidate in the 2026 state election, Finance Minister and senior CPI(M) leader KN Balagopal has confirmed. He said senior party leaders had already endorsed Vijayan's candidature, and LDF was confident of securing an unprecedented third consecutive term.

In an interview with PTI, Balagopal said continuity was essential to sustain the development momentum of the Pinarayi I and II governments, which he credited with attracting major industries and new technologies to the state.

He also reiterated accusations that Union Government had denied Kerala over Rs 50,000 crore annually, but said the state would still fund its welfare commitments.

Balagopal, who succeeded Thomas Isaac as Finance Minister in 2021, said his approach was rooted in collective decision-making within the CPI(M). *—PTI*

Outcry as Kerala jury drops children's film in state awards

T'PURAM, 4 NOV

A controversy has erupted over the Kerala State Film Awards jury's decision to withhold honors for child actors and children's films, drawing criticism from child actress Devananda and filmmaker Vinesh Viswanath. In a Facebook post, Malikappuram star Devananda accused the jury of ignoring talented young performers, citing impressive work in films such as Sthanarthi Sreekuttan, Gu, ARM and Phoenix. She said the move contradicted the jury chairman's call to encourage more children to act in films. "If those two children had received the awards, it would have inspired many others," she wrote, adding that true progress lies in protecting children's rights. Filmmaker Vinesh Viswanath, who directed 'Sthanarthi Sreekuttan', also voiced displeasure. *—PTI*

HC grants bail to accused in 2011 Mumbai blast case

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday granted bail to a 65-year-old man arrested in connection with the 2011 Mumbai triple blasts that killed 27 people and injured over 120. A division bench of Justices AS Gadkari and RR Bhonsale granted bail to Kafeel Ahmed Mohammed Ayub, a Bihar resident, on a surety of Rs 1 lakh. The detailed order is awaited. Ayub, arrested in February 2012, has been lodged in Mumbai Central prison for nearly 13 years. The blasts on 13, July, 2011, occurred within 10 minutes at Zaveri Bazaar, Opera House, and Dadar Kabutarkhana. The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) attributed the coordinated attack to the Indian Mujahideen (IM), alleging its founder, Yasin Bhatkal, masterminded the operation. *—PTI*

Assam girl raped by 3 on way back from school

TINSUKIA, 4 NOV

A girl was allegedly gang raped in Assam's Tinsukia district when she was returning home from school, police said on Tuesday. The incident happened in the Bordubi police station area on Monday afternoon, they said. As per the girl's statement, three men raped and dumped her on the roadside while she was returning home from school, an officer said. According to her family, the class 7 student did not return home after school, which ended at 2.30pm, he said. "Around 5pm, an e-rickshaw driver informed the family that he had found her lying by the roadside in a semi-conscious condition in the vicinity of a tea garden. They rushed to the spot and found her with visible marks of injuries and clothes torn," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Journalist Rana Ayyub, her father get death threats

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

Prominent journalist Rana Ayyub and her father received death threats on 2 November after a caller from a Canadian number allegedly demanded that she publish a Washington Post op-ed glorifying Indira Gandhi's assassination. Ayyub said the caller, using the name Harry Shooter and a profile photo resembling jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, read out her home address and threatened to kill her father. She received multiple calls and WhatsApp messages within 20 minutes. Ayyub alerted Navi Mumbai Police, who immediately deployed security at her residence and traced her travelling parents. No FIR has been filed yet. The Committee to Protect Journalists urged swift action. Ayyub, often targeted online, including after her phone number was leaked in 2024, said the threats reflect ongoing attempts to intimidate journalists. *—Salar News*

3 Coimbatore gangrape suspects shot at, held

Survivor shown 60 photos but unable to identify attackers

COIMBATORE, 4 NOV

Police personnel at a government hospital where three suspects in a college student sexual assault case were brought after being shot and apprehended by the police in Coimbatore on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Three suspects involved in the sexual assault of a college student in Coimbatore were shot in the legs and arrested after they allegedly attacked a police team during a late-night chase. The incident has drawn strong condemnation, with Chief Minister MK Stalin directing police to file a chargesheet within a month and ensure the accused receive the maximum punishment.

The survivor was unable to identify the attackers despite being shown over 60 photographs of known offenders, investigators said, adding that CCTV cameras in the area failed to capture the culprits' faces due to glare.

The accused, Satish alias Karuppasamy, 30; his brother Karthi alias Kalishewaran, 21; both from Virudhunagar, and their relative Guna alias Thavasi, 20; from Madurai, were traced on 3 November to a hideout in Vellakinaru. Coimbatore City Police Commissioner A. Saravana Sundar said the trio attacked officers, forcing the police to use "minimum force" and fire below their knees. A constable was injured in the scuffle.

Police said the men, who have multiple criminal cases including murder, theft and assault, were in Coimbatore to attend a court hearing. On the night of 2 November, after robbing a two-wheeler and consuming alcohol, they were travelling near the airport when they spotted the student and her male friend inside a parked car. They allegedly smashed the windows with stones, assaulted the man with a sharp weapon, dragged the woman to a dark, isolated spot and raped her.

Sundar said there was no delay in the police response: the victim's friend called the control room at 11.20pm, and a patrol team reached within 15 minutes. The survivor was found with the help of locals and taken to hospital, where she is reported to be out of danger and receiving psychological counselling.

Police registered a gangrape case against the three men, who are now hospitalised along with the injured constable. *—PTI*

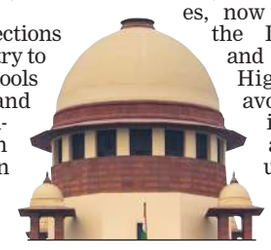
'MEN MUST BE AWARE'

SC flags misuse of POCSO

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed concern over the misuse of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, noting that it is increasingly invoked in cases arising from marital disputes and consensual adolescent relationships. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and R Mahadevan said greater awareness is needed, particularly among boys and men, about the law's stringent provisions.

The bench made the remarks while hearing a PIL seeking nationwide sensitisation on rape laws and POCSO to ensure a safer environment for girls and women. The court adjourned the matter to 2 December, observing that several states and Union Territories were yet to file their responses. The petition argues that public awareness about sexual-offence laws, especially after amendments following the Nirbhaya case, remains inadequate.



The PIL seeks directions to Education Ministry to ensure that all schools imparting free and compulsory education to children include material on offences against women and children. *—PTI*

SC seeks Centre's response against online gaming ban

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Supreme Court directed the Centre to file a comprehensive reply to petitions challenging the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, which imposes a blanket ban on "online money games" and prohibits banking and advertising support for them. The bench noted that only an interim response had been filed and asked that the full reply be served in advance to petitioners, who may file rejoinders. The matter will be heard on 26 November.

The Act, India's first central law banning real-money online gaming, including fantasy sports and e-sports played for stakes, faces multiple challenges, now transferred from the Delhi, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh High Courts to avoid conflicting rulings. Petitioners argue the law unlawfully bans skill-based games, violating Article 19(1)(g). *—PTI*

Tourist footfall decrease to 17,000 amid Manipur riots

IMPHAL, 4 NOV

The unrest remains the main deterrent despite rehabilitation efforts for internally displaced persons *PHOTO: PTI*

Tourist arrivals in Manipur have plummeted to around 17,000 in 2024–25 from 1.79 lakh in 2019–20, amid continuing ethnic unrest and fresh militant violence in the state, officials said.

During a review meeting with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, state officials said ongoing conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities and soaring airfares have crippled tourism and local livelihoods. They highlighted that the sharp fall in visitor numbers has severely impacted the hospitality sector, transport operators, and small businesses dependent on tourism.

Officials urged the minister to raise the airfare issue with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and seek possible fare rationalisation or special flight subsidies to revive visitor interest.

"The number of tourists visiting the state has drastically decreased from over 1,79,000 in 2019–20 to approximately 17,000 in 2024–25," officials told Kumar. The unrest, they said, remains the main deterrent despite ongoing central relief and rehabilitation efforts for internally displaced persons.

Kumar also reviewed the implementation of central schemes and funds allocated for relief operations.

4 KILLED IN ENCOUNTER

Adding to the tensions, four militants of the proscribed United Kuki National Army (UKNA) were killed in an encounter with security forces early Tuesday at Khanpi village in Churachandpur district.

According to police, the operation began around 5.30am following intelligence on armed UKNA cadres, who are not signatories to the Suspension of Operations pact.

A fierce gunfight ensued, leaving four insurgents dead while others fled. *—PTI*

19 KILLED IN CRASH

30 Telangana bus accident passengers to be discharged

HYDERABAD/JAIPUR, 4 NOV

Most of the passengers injured in the deadly bus–lorry collision in Telangana's Ranga Reddy district are recovering well and expected to be discharged soon, police said on Tuesday.

Thirty of the 38 passengers injured in the crash are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals. "None of them suffered major injuries, and most are likely to be discharged by Tuesday," a police official said. The bodies of all 19 victims have been handed over to their families, and funerals for 17 have already been completed.

The accident occurred on Monday when a gravel-laden tipper lorry collided head-on with a government bus, killing 19 people and injuring over 30. Officials said the investigation into the cause of the crash is continuing, with a detailed report expected this week. Police have also stepped up highway patrolling, issued advisories to transport operators, and asked bus depots to reinforce safety checks and driver rest schedules to prevent fatigue-related mishaps.

PHOTO: PTI

RAJASTHAN LAUNCHES ROAD SAFETY DRIVE

In a separate development, Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma has ordered a 15-day road safety and enforcement drive following two fatal accidents in Phalodi and Jaipur. He called it a 'wake-up call' and directed officials to adopt zero tolerance. The drive will identify accident-prone black spots, remove encroachments, crack down on overspeeding and drunk driving, and strengthen emergency response. *—PTI*

Teen posts reel against Hindu gods, parents jailed

ETAWAH, 4 NOV

A 12-year-old girl has been sent to a juvenile home, while her parents have been arrested after the minor allegedly posted a video on social media that contained derogatory remarks against Hindu deities, officials said on Tuesday.

The girl uploaded the one-minute video on a social media platform on 27 October.

It soon went viral, sparking protests from Hindu organisations, which demanded strict action.

Taking note of the video, police launched an investigation and found that the girl had created the video with the knowledge of her parents, Mohammad Shabbir alias Sabir and his wife Shameena, and a Instagram friend named Asif, a resident of Azad Nagar Tila.

City Circle Officer (CO) Abhay Nath Rai said that during the probe, it was found that the video was intentionally created to gain followers and online income, leading to public anger and tension. "Despite being aware of the act, the parents did not stop their daughter.," Rai said. *—PTI*

HC directs Centre to set criteria for deaf athletes in Khel Ratna

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre to swiftly frame criteria that would allow hearing-impaired sportspersons to be considered for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, 2025, observing that the current rules discriminate against them when compared with para-athletes.

Justice Sachin Datta, in an order passed on Monday, said the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 leaves no scope for differential treatment between those with hearing impairments and those with physical or locomotor disabilities. However, the existing framework under the Scheme of Cash Awards for Medal Winners effectively excludes deaf athletes from recognition and creates a "discriminatory regime". The court said the new criteria must be framed expeditiously so that deaf sportspersons can apply for the award, and directed that the 28 October deadline for applications be extended appropriately. The order came on a petition filed by Virender Singh, internationally acclaimed hearing-impaired wrestler, multiple Deaflympics medallist. *—PTI*

Stalker shoots at UP girl returning from coaching

FARIDABAD, 4 NOV

Police have launched a manhunt for a 20-year-old youth who allegedly shot a 17-year-old JEE aspirant in Faridabad's Shyam Colony, injuring her in the shoulder and abdomen.

The accused, identified as Jatin Mangla of Sarmathla village near Gurugram's Sohna, allegedly opened fire on the girl, Kanishka, while she was returning home from a library on Monday evening. CCTV footage showed the assailant waiting in a lane before firing at close range and fleeing.

Kanishka, a Class 12 science student from Bhagat Singh Colony, is stable and undergoing treatment at a Sector 8 hospital. Police said Mangla had been stalking her for months and had earlier apologised to her family for his behaviour.

A CCTV footage shows the stalker aiming the gun at the girl *PHOTO: PTI*

Ballabhgarh City SHO Shamsher Singh said both studied at the same library, where Mangla enrolled six months ago. "He often hovered around her despite warnings. His membership was revoked within 15 days, and the girl's was also cancelled," he said. When Kanishka rejoined five months ago, Mangla was denied re-entry but continued following her.

Police have formed four teams, including crime branch personnel, to trace Mangla, who works as an accountant at a private college nearby. "Raids are being conducted to arrest him at the earliest," Singh said. Authorities have also sought public assistance, urging anyone with information about Mangla's whereabouts to contact the nearest police station. *—PTI*

'RIGHTS OVER RELIGION'

1st wife must be heard before 2nd nikah: HC

KOCHI, 4 NOV

The court acknowledged that Muslim law allows a second marriage, but only in specific situations *PHOTO: AI*

The Kerala High Court has held that when a Muslim man seeks to register his second marriage under the Kerala Registration of Marriages (Common) Rules, 2008, his first wife must be heard, as her marriage with him remains legally valid.

Justice PV Kunhikrishnan said constitutional rights override religious customs, noting that "customary law is not applicable" when it comes to registration of a second marriage. The court added it does not believe the Quran or Muslim law permits a man to enter into a relationship with another woman while the first marriage exists, especially without the first wife's knowledge.

The ruling came while the court declined to entertain a petition filed by a man and his second wife seeking directions to register their marriage. The judge refused to consider the plea because the first wife was not made a party.

The court acknowledged that Muslim law allows a second marriage, but "only in specific situations", and stressed that a first wife "cannot be a silent spectator" during the registration process. If the first wife raises objections, the registrar may refer the parties to a civil court to determine the marriage's validity.

In the case before the court, the man had married another woman while his first marriage was intact, claiming he had his first wife's consent. However, the local body refused to register the second marriage. "Let Muslim women also get an opportunity of hearing when their husbands remarry, at least at the stage of registering the second marriage," the court said, dismissing the plea. *—PTI*

Delhi's toxic air caused 15% of all deaths in 2023: Report

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Air pollution has emerged as the national capital's deadliest killer, responsible for nearly 15 per cent of all deaths in 2023, according to an analysis of Global Burden of Disease (GBD) data.

Ex-AIIMS director Randeep Guleria warned that Delhi's toxic smog is deadlier than Covid-19, urging those with weak lungs to leave as PM2.5 raises risks of heart attacks, strokes and infertility.

The assessment by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), based on findings from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, estimated 17,188 deaths last year were linked to long-term exposure to PM2.5, fine particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream.

Despite the alarming toll, the Union Environment Ministry maintains there is 'no conclusive evidence' linking air pollution directly to mortality.

CREA researcher Dr Manoj Kumar said the science was unequivocal. "Air pollution is not just an environmental issue, it's a public health emergency," he said, warning of rising cases of heart disease, stroke, and chronic respiratory illnesses.

Between 2018 and 2023, pollution-related deaths rose by nearly 9 per cent, overtaking fatalities caused by hypertension and diabetes. Delhi now ranks sixth among India's most polluted cities, recording an average PM2.5 level of 107 µg/m³ in October, three times higher than September's average. Dr Kumar said meaningful change would require "firm regulation, strict enforcement, and a decisive shift away from vehicle and industrial emissions driving toxic air." *—PTI*

DEVOTION TRANSCENDS BORDERS

At least 2,100 Sikh pilgrims from India entered Pakistan to attend a 10-day festival marking 556th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. This is the first major crossing since the Pahalgam attack and the deadly clashes in May closed the border between the neighbouring countries ***PHOTO: PTI***

Cricket WC win could transform women's sport

On Sunday, India's women won the cricket World Cup for the first time in what is likely to be a game-changing victory for women, cricket and other sports in the country.

There were 45,000 excited fans in Mumbai to see India defeat South Africa at the end of a five-week tournament that featured eight teams. There were also congratulations from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other public figures.

It was an unforgettable experience for those who watched in the stadium or elsewhere. "What happened was unbelievable, just a miracle," Mumbai fan Tanvi Agrawal told DW. "I watched with my friends in a restaurant, and it was great to see both men and women, boys and girls cheering for the team."

Agrawal said it was emotional when the trophy was lifted. "When I was a girl at school, there were no opportunities to play cricket," she said. "It made me feel so proud and emotional to see this win. We have come a long way and there is no limit now for these players."

India's players celebrate with the trophy during the presentation ceremony after winning the ICC Women's World Cup 2025, at the DY Patil Stadium, in Navi Mumbai, early Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Echoes of 1980s win

Sachin Tendulkar, the country's most celebrated cricketer, has not been alone in comparing the triumph to the 1983 World Cup win. Over four decades ago in London, the men's team lifted the trophy for the first time, which helped set India on the way to become the dominant power in cricket.

"That win in 1983 changed everything for men's cricket and this will do the same for the women," Dr Sarthak Mondal, president of the Indian Sport Management Association, an independent body concerned with driving sport dvelopment in the country, told DW.

"In India, we celebrate people who win as we have a kind of culture of, 'if you don't win, you are not worthy'."

After defeats in the finals in 2005 and 2017, it started to look like it was never going to happen for the women. "People were starting to lose patience so it was time to win and the women delivered."

Mondal believes that it will take time for it all to sink in for these heroes. "I watched the players being interviewed after the game and I don't think they realize what they have done, perhaps in 50 years they will."

Change finally coming

It has not been an easy ride. At 21, the youngest member of the victorious team, Shafali Verma, was one of the heroes in the final, scoring 87 runs and taking two wickets. It is just 12 years since she had to disguise herself as a boy to play cricket for her local team in the state of Haryana, regarded as one of India's most conservative.

Progress has been made since. In 2022, India's cricket board mandated equal pay for men and women when they played international matches. More pay has meant more security, more time to train, better fitness levels and more professionalism. The Women's Premier League was set up in 2023, 15 years after the men's edition, which has become one of the most lucrative sporting leagues in the world. It was a huge step forward for the women's game and the players.

"In terms of revenue generated from the Premier Leagues, women get paid 2 per cent more than men," said Mondal. "They may generate less but in real terms they get paid more."

Though international match fees have been equalised, male players still earn substantially more through their much larger annual retainers with the country's cricket board and lucrative commercial deals.

Success can drive grassroots change

Mondal expects that the World Cup win will bring more money into the game, from both the public and private sector.

"When I was growing up, there weren't many famous women cricketers but now there are all these women who are now icons," cricket fan Tanvi Agrawal said. "I am sure that young girls are seeing all this. It must be impossible not to be inspired."

If the success is going to take women's cricket to the next level, then there are sure to be consequences for other sports in the country too.

Shaji Prabhakaran, former general secretary of the All India Football Federation, told DW "In football, the female players are from more rural areas, from a few pockets, not across all India and that is a big difference." The cricket team is drawn from all corners of the country of 1.4 billion.

In difficult times for men's football in India, the women have stepped up however, qualifying for the Asian Cup, to be held in Australia in March, for the first time. "If the women's football team qualifies for the World Cup, that will excite the neutrals, and that is the long-term target. This cricket win excites every Indian. It will never be forgotten." —*The DW*

SALAR ساہر

Before 'I do', Delhi couples say 'yes' to air purifiers

Garlands, Garlands, flowers, food and music... As the air quality plummets and the skies turn hazy, add another wedding must have this season – air purifiers!

From making sure there are enough air purifiers to colour coordinated masks, families are scrambling to deal with pollution and are tweaking their budgets to ensure their guests breathe clean air.

Mohsin Khan, of Vivah Luxury Weddings, has had clients ordering 4 to 10 air purifiers for their indoor events. Other people in the business shared similar experiences. Khan, who has been in the industry for over 15 years, said people are ready to spend Rs 20,000 to Rs 40,000 extra for clean air this season.

The rental cost of these purifiers is around Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per purifier, depending on the brand and other factors, he added.

The requests for having air purifiers at weddings is more from families hosting guests from abroad, the wedding planner said, adding that NRIs are even reconsidering their wedding plans in the current scenario.

"They are used to AQI levels below 100, and when they land in Delhi and see it reaching 400, they start asking for purifiers. It is a matter of genuine concern for them," Khan told PTI.

Concurring with Khan, Megha Jindal of Mega Weddings and Events, noted that the shift in priorities is visible.

Indoor functions, especially sangeets, now come with purifier requests to the hotels where they are being held, she said.

From banquet halls to indoor sangeets, families are renting multiple purifiers and turning their venues into mini clean-air zones.

Several families are shifting their venues from open lawns to indoor banquet halls, Khan said, adding a few others are even opting to move their celebrations out of the city altogether to better AQI destinations like Mussoorie, Chandigarh, and other nearby towns and cities.

Sangeeta, a wedding planner from South Delhi said that even middle-class families are trying to adapt.

"They cannot afford sprawling outdoor lawns, so banquet halls are their safest bet. And many health-conscious clients are asking for air purifiers there too," she said.

When it comes to quirky requests, the wedding planners get many of them. Sharing one such instance, Sangeeta said that one of her clients demanded a portable purifier for the bride during the rituals.

"One of my other clients, who is from a family of doctors told me, 'We do not want to look like we are spending too much, but we really need a few purifiers'. So they sneakily hid three purifiers behind the DJ console and stage backdrop," she recalled.

A wedding planner from West Delhi shared that the issue of air quality has trickled down even into the fashion choices that brides make. One bride even wore a mask matching her outfit. She wore masks for a few of her functions and made the groom follow that as well, he added.

Guests, too, are coming prepared.

"At a recent early morning function, half the guests arrived with their own masks," the wedding planner shared. Despite the smog and toxic air, wedding planners say Delhi's celebratory spirit refuses to dim. "Delhi weddings can survive anything, they survived Covid-19 pandemic, and now pollution," he added.

60% RISE IN EYE PROBLEMS IN TOXIC DELHI

A thick blanket of smog and toxic air hanging over Delhi has triggered a sharp rise in eye-related ailments like allergies, dryness, burning sensations, and excessive watering, affecting both adults and children, according to the city's doctors.

With the air quality plunging to the severe category after Deepavali, ophthalmologists say they have seen a 60 per cent surge in such cases, blaming the the toxic cocktail of smoke, particulate matter, and chemical residues from firecracker burning. The dangerously high level of pollution, they warned, was not only harmful for the lungs, but for the eyes as well.

Dr Ikeda Lal, Senior Cornea, Cataract and Refractive Surgery Specialist at Delhi Eye Centre and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said, "Every year after Diwali, we brace for a rise in eye complaints. The number of patients complaining of itching, redness, and irritation has gone up by almost 50-60 per cent.

"We are seeing patients with severe eye allergies, and those who already have dry eyes are experiencing much more discomfort than usual. The combination of pollution, dust, and chemical exposure is proving extremely harmful for the ocular surface," Lal said.

Dr Rajesh Sinha, Professor of Ophthalmology at the RP Centre in AIIMS, said in the last few days, the number of patients suffering from dryness, burning, and watery eyes has increased by around 50 per cent.

The eyes, being directly exposed to the environment, are among the first organs to suffer when pollution levels soar. Pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and carbon particles react with the moisture in the eyes, leading to chemical irritation and inflammation.

People should avoid contact lenses and heavy eye makeup during such high-pollution days and instead, use lubricating eye drops, wear protective glasses, and wash their eyes frequently with clean water to reduce the impact of pollution, Lal said.

Doctors also suggested wearing protective eyewear when stepping outdoors, limiting outdoor activity during peak smog hours, and using air purifiers indoors to reduce exposure to irritant particles. — *PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SIR: All you need to know before BLOs land up at your doorstep

As part of the implementation of the much-anticipated and politically hyper-charged SIR of electoral rolls, booth level officers start knocking on voters' doors from Tuesday. Here are answers to some questions that readers may have on how to participate in the exercise:

1. How to identify booth level officers (BLOs)?

All BLOs will carry identity cards bearing QR codes, which can be scanned to verify the identity details of the officer concerned from the Election Commission website. Moreover, the enumeration forms would also bear the name and phone number of the BLO assigned for the specific booth she or he will be covering.

It is likely that booth level agents (BLAs) identified and assigned by political parties would be accompanying the BLOs.

2. How would I know when a BLO would come to my address? What happens if I am not at home?

BLOs are expected to be equipped with information about all voters under their respective booths. There would be some kind of an advance notice before the officer lands up at your doorstep. Even if you are not at home, the BLO would make repeat visits to your address, three times at least.

3. What documents do I need to keep handy?

A BLO would hand you over two sets of enumeration forms for every voter in your family. You would need to fill them up in duplicate and sign them. Your BLO would countersign both forms. The officer would then retain one form for the ECI and hand you back the second with a stamped acknowledgement, which you may need for future reference.

You need to have your current EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity or Voter Card), Aadhar Card, two current passport-size photos and the 2002 electoral roll reference, if your or your parents' or grandparents' names feature in that list.

If the names don't feature the SIR 2002 list, then you will be issued a notice at a later date to produce your citizenship credentials as per the list of 11 indicative documents named by the ECI and have your name enlisted in the final electoral roll, which will be published next year, post the completion of the SIR exercise.

4. Is there anything I need to keep in mind while filling the enumeration form?

It is a simple single-page form divided into two parts. The upper part would require details of the voter, based on their current EPIC.

Retain the exact spelling, relationship status and other information in exactly the way it was mentioned in the 2002 rolls, even if there were mistakes there which you may have rectified later. Do not fill up enumeration forms from multiple locations. That would make both liable to be cancelled.

Nawada BLO conducts door-to-door distribution of enumeration forms and collection of filled forms under the Special Intensive Revision-2025 ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, on Sunday ***PHOTO: ANI***

5. Can I fill up the forms of family members who are enlisted as voters in my booth but are currently out of station?

Yes, anyone in the family can fill up the enumeration forms of absentee members with the required documents.

6. Who should I submit it to after I have finished filling it up?

Your BLO concerned will collect your forms once you have finished filling them up. This month-long process of house-to-house enumeration will continue till 4 December and the draft rolls will be published on 9 December.

Claims and objections can be raised from 9 December to 8 January. Notices will be issued, and hearings and verifications will take place between 9 December and 31 January. The final electoral rolls will be published on 7 February.

7. Can I fill up the enumeration forms in online mode?

Yes. You will have to download the form, fill it up physically and upload it in the manner instructed. The online forms are not available on the website just yet on account of technical issues, but ECI officials have said they are trying to fix the problem urgently, and the forms will soon be made available on the CEO's webpage.

8. How would the SIR exercise impact my citizenship status?

The SIR exercise is being conducted to ascertain your eligibility as a legitimate voter of this country. The Election Commission of India has no authority to determine your citizenship. —*PTI*

Aircraft engineers' strike disrupts Pak Int'l Airlines flights

KARACHI, 4 NOV

An unannounced strike by aircraft engineers has led to significant disruption of flights for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) since Monday night. As a result, at least eight international flights and numerous domestic flights have been cancelled, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded at airports in Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi. Engineers have refused to issue safety clearances for scheduled flights. Hafeez Khan, a PIA official, said, "We and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will be taking strong disciplinary action against the involved engineers for causing flight disruptions and losses to the airline." A spokesperson for the Society of Airline Engineers Association said that the strike would persist until PIA & CAA improve treatment of engineers. *—PTI*

France threatens Shein over sale of childlike sex dolls

PARIS, 4 NOV

French authorities have indicated potential action against online fast fashion giant Shein following reports of childlike sex dolls being sold on its website. The Directorate General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control stated that the dolls' descriptions clearly suggested a child-pornographic nature. Economy Minister Roland Lescure confirmed that the government could request a market ban for Shein if such incidents recur. Shein has removed the listings and initiated an internal investigation to prevent future occurrences. A parliamentary fact-finding mission will summon Shein officials for questioning, amidst increasing concern about the retailer's practices and the planned opening of its first physical store in Paris. *—PTI*

Tanzanian security forces secretly dumping bodies

NAIROBI, 4 NOV

Authorities in Tanzania faced mounting concern Tuesday over killings during crackdowns on protests, with the largest opposition party alleging that security forces were secretly dumping bodies of hundreds killed in the violence. Demonstrations spread after the 29 October voting as youths protested an election that foreign observers said failed to meet democratic standards as key opposition figures were barred. Authorities declared curfew and security forces cracked down on protests. Main opposition party, Chadema, claimed that at least 1,000 were killed and said that security forces were trying to hide the scale of the deaths by secretly disposing of bodies. The authorities have not responded. *—PTI*

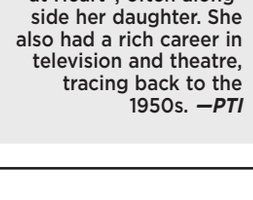


PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA

3-time Oscar nominee, Diane Ladd, dies at 89

OJAI, 4 NOV

Diane Ladd, the acclaimed actress known for her roles in films like "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore", has passed away at the age of 89, as announced by her daughter, Laura Dern. Ladd, a three-time Academy Awards nominee, died at her home with Dern by her side. Dern celebrated her mother's legacy, calling her an "amazing hero" and a "profound gift." Ladd's film career spanned decades, showcasing her talents in works such as "Chinatown" and "Wild at Heart", often alongside her daughter. She also had a rich career in television and theatre, tracing back to the 1950s. *—PTI*

Trump is scared: Mamdani leads in NYC mayoral race

Results will shine a light on US' mood towards Trump govt

NEW YORK, 4 NOV

Polls opened on Tuesday across the US as the country headed to a crucial poll, with all eyes set on the important New York City mayoral election, where Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani is emerging as a frontrunner.

November 4 is election day across the US, with polls opening from 6 am to 9 pm. The early voting period, which commenced on October 25, ended on Sunday. This is the first national election in the second term of Donald Trump's presidency, and the results will also shine a spotlight on the country's mood towards the current White House administration.

Apart from the NYC mayoral election, ballots for the governor of New Jersey and Virginia will also be closely watched.

Mamdani, 34, born in Uganda and raised in New York City, is a New York State Assembly member and democratic socialist running for Mayor.

Zohran Mamdani meets supporters at Brooklyn Bridge *PHOTO: X*

Mamdani said US President Trump is "threatened" by his campaign, as the American leader warned voters that the city's "survival" is at risk if the Democratic nominee wins.

"You can clearly see that Donald Trump is threatened by our campaign. He's threatened by it because, like his, we've diagnosed the crisis in working class New Yorkers' lives - the cost of living," Mamdani told CNN. "But unlike him, we're actually going to deliver on that. And that is a contrast that he can't bear to see, because while he is spending USD 300 million remodelling a White House ballroom, the same amount of money that could provide SNAP benefits for 100,000 New Yorkers."

Trump threatened to cut funds to NYC if Mamdani won. Trump notably backed former New York State governor and Independent candidate Andrew Cuomo – a former Democrat - over his party candidate Curtis Sliwa.

Former US president Barack Obama reportedly refused to endorse Mamdani. However, Mamdani's campaign advisor, who had worked with the former president, said that Obama doesn't endorse candidates in local races.

MUSK ATTACKS

Mamdani has been at the brunt of several racist attacks. Tech mogul Elon Musk mocked Mamdani's name. "Bear in mind that a vote for Curtis is really a vote for Mumdumi or whatever his name is," wrote Musk. *—Agencies*

Pak & China deny Trump's nuke claim

BEIJING, 4 NOV

China denied US President Donald Trump's claim that it is secretly conducting nuclear weapons tests, calling the allegations "completely false." Meanwhile, Pakistan said that it "will not be the first to resume nuclear tests".

Responding to Trump's remarks made during a CBS interview on Sunday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a nuclear-weapon state, China adheres to a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons, maintains a self-defensive nuclear strategy and has honoured its commitment to suspend nuclear testing."

She added that China supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and called on the United States to "abide by its own obligations" under the same treaty.

"We hope the United States will also maintain its moratorium on nuclear testing and contribute to global stability."

Meanwhile, a senior Pakistani official told CBS that "Pakistan was not the first to carry out nuclear tests and will not be the first to resume nuclear tests."

In his '60 Minute' interview, Trump claimed that several countries including Russia, China, North Korea and Pakistan, were already conducting nuclear tests, suggesting that the US should resume its own testing programme. *—Agencies*

These sophisticated Patriot systems are the most effective weapon against Russian missiles *PHOTO: X*

Ukraine gets Patriot air defence systems

KYIV, 4 NOV

- Zelenskyy has pleaded with Western partners to provide more of them, but production limitations and the need to maintain stockpiles have slowed their delivery.

Ukraine has received more US-made Patriot air defence systems to help it counter Russia's daily barrages, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as Russian drones killed a man and injured five of his family members, including two children, in the latest nighttime attack.

Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line following its full-scale invasion has killed thousands of civilians. It has also targeted the energy supply ahead of winter.

The sophisticated Patriot systems are the most effective weapon against Russian missiles. Zelenskyy has pleaded with Western partners to provide more of them, but production limitations and the need to maintain stockpiles have slowed their delivery.

"More Patriots are now in Ukraine and being put into operation," Zelenskyy said late Sunday. "Of course, more systems are needed to protect key infrastructure sites and our cities."

He thanked Germany and its Chancellor Friedrich Merz for the Patriots. Germany has given to Ukraine more Patriot systems from its own armed forces than any other country, the German Defence Ministry said Monday. Germany has also supplied shorter range air defence systems, such as IRIS-T and Skynex. *—PTI*

S Korean prez calls for tripling AI spending in budget speech

SEOUL, 4 NOV

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Tuesday called for tripling the government spending on artificial intelligence infrastructure and technology to 10.1 trillion won in a budget speech.

Lee called for lawmakers to approve 8.2 per cent increase in defence spending next year, which he said would help modernise the military's weapons and reduce its reliance on the US, as the allies' military chiefs met in Seoul for annual security talks. Lee's speech came after South Korea last week hosted the leaders of major Pacific Rim nations for this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings. *—PTI*

Dick Cheney, polarising former vice president of US, dies at 84

WASHINGTON, 4 NOV

Dick Cheney, the polarising figure who served as one of the most powerful vice presidents in US history, has died at the age of 84.

His family confirmed he passed away on Monday night due to complications from pneumonia and cardiac and vascular disease.

"For decades, Dick Cheney served our nation... a great and good man who taught his children and grandchildren to love our country," read the family statement.

Cheney, a former White House Chief of Staff, Congressman, and Secretary of Defence, was Vice President under George W Bush and played a crucial role in the Iraq War.

He often described himself as the "ultimate No. 2 guy," committed to Bush's agenda.

Despite his influential role, he faced scrutiny for his hawkish stances, especially on Iraq, where he repeatedly defended assertions that later proved unfounded.

Years later, he became a vocal critic of now US President Donald Trump, stating, "In our nation's 246-year history, there has never been an individual who was a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump."

Cheney is survived by his wife Lynne and daughters Liz and Mary. *—PTI*

30 JAN, 1941 – 3 NOV, 2025

TYPHOON RAVAGES PHILIPPINES

Vehicles are piled on one another in Cebu city, Philippines, as Typhoon Kalmaegi wreaked havoc, claiming at least 26 lives. People were trapped due to torrential rains and winds while a Philippine air force helicopter with five personnel on board crashed in a separate incident in southern Agusan del Sur province while attempting to provide humanitarian assistance to provinces battered by Kalmaegi *PHOTO: PTI*

Sudan war is spiraling out of control: UN secretary-general

DUBAI, 4 NOV

The United Nations secretary-general warned on Tuesday that the war in Sudan is "spiralling out of control" after a paramilitary force seized the Darfur city of el-Fasher.

Speaking at a UN summit in Qatar, Antonio Guterres offered a stark warning about el-Fasher and called for an immediate ceasefire in the two-year conflict that's become one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

"Hundreds of thousands of civilians are trapped by this siege," Guterres said. "People are dying of malnutrition, disease and violence. And we are hearing continued reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights."

He added that there also were "credible reports of widespread executions since the Rapid Support Forces entered the city."

The RSF besieged el-Fasher for 18 months, cutting off much of the food and other supplies needed by tens of thousands of people. Last week, the paramilitary group seized the city. *—PTI*

North Korea's ceremonial head Kim Yong Nam dies at 97

SEOUL, 4 NOV

Kim Yong Nam, North Korea's ceremonial head of state for two decades, died at the age of 97 from multiple organ failure, according to state media.

His death was reported by the Korean Central News Agency on Tuesday, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressing deep condolences. A funeral is scheduled for Thursday.

Kim served as president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly from 1998 till 2019, a role largely symbolic as true power resided within the Kim family dynasty. He represented North Korea at key international events, including the Pyeongchang Olympics in 2018 alongside Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong. This marked his highest-profile engagement, with both officials sitting near then-US vice president Mike Pence.

He held significant roles, including 15 years as foreign minister. A graduate of Kim Il Sung University and Moscow State University, Kim Yong Nam epitomised North Korean bureaucratic loyalty. *—PTI*

AMID ISLAMIST PROTESTS

B'desh scraps music class, PE in schools

DHAKA, 4 NOV

Bangladesh has scrapped the newly created physical education and music education posts. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education issued a notification late Monday following pressure from Islamists groups.

The Muhammed Yunus led interim-government amended the Government Primary School Teacher Recruitment Rules of 2025 which it recently passed and removed the positions for music teachers.

The reversal follows strong protests from Bangladesh's largest Islamist political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, who call music "haram".

Mia Golam Parwar, a senior Jamaat leader, said it was unacceptable to appoint music and dance teachers without also hiring religious instructors.

The decision comes ahead of the elections in in February, as Yunus has been under increasing pressure over the July Charter, which seeks to formalise political changes following the ousting of Sheikh Hasina's regime, but has been met with stiff opposition from several political parties.

Chief Advisor Muhammed Yunus gifted a Turkish delegation a map showing India's Northeast as part of Bangladesh *PHOTO: X@ChiefAdviserGoB*

YUNUS GIFTS TURKEY MAP OF 'GREATER BANGLADESH'

Meanwhile, Yunus gifted a Turkish delegation a map which features India's Northeast a part of Bangladesh – the same gift he had given to a Pakistani general recently.

During the Monday meeting, Yunus said the two sides "discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and humanitarian initiatives".

The map, which is featured on the cover of the book the 'Art of Triumph' is seen to perpetuate the fringe Greater Bangladesh theory which is popular among several Right-wing groups. *—Agencies*

US won't deport wrongfully jailed Indian-origin man

PHILADELPHIA, 4 NOV

Two US courts have blocked the deportation of an Indian-origin man who spent over four decades in prison before his murder conviction was overturned, a case that has drawn national attention for its extraordinary injustice.

Subramanyam 'Subu' Vedam, 64, a legal permanent resident, remains in immigration custody at a short-term detention centre in Alexandria, Louisiana, which includes an airstrip used for deportations. He was transferred there from central Pennsylvania last week, relatives said, after being released from state prison on 3 October.

An immigration judge on Thursday stayed his deportation until the Board of Immigration Appeals decides whether to review his case, a process that could take months. The same day, a federal judge in Pennsylvania also issued a stay.

Vedam, who came to the US legally from India as an infant, grew up in State College, where his father taught at Penn State University. He was serving a life sentence for the 1980 killing of a friend until his conviction was vacated this year after new evidence emerged.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement seeks his removal over a decades-old no-contest plea to LSD delivery when he was about 20. His lawyers argue his wrongful imprisonment, education, and rehabilitation outweigh that offence. *—PTI*

'Wealth of India's richest 1% grew by 62% since 2000'

PHOTO: AI

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

India's richest 1 per cent expanded its wealth by 62 per cent between 2000 to 2023, according to a report commissioned by the South African Presidency of the G20.

The study, led by Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, warns that global inequality has reached "emergency" levels, threatening democracy, economic stability, and climate progress.

The G20 Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Inequality, which includes economists Jayati Ghosh, Winnie Byanyima, and Imraan Valodia, found that the top 1 per cent globally captured 41 per cent of all new wealth created between 2000 and 2024, while the bottom half of humanity received just 1 per cent.

The report said the inter-country inequality, broadly measured, appears to have reduced because of the rise in per capita incomes in some very populous countries like China and India, which brought down the share of high-income countries in global GDP somewhat.

The report said that between 2000 and 2023, the richest 1 per cent increased their share of the wealth in over half of all countries, which contain 74 per cent of the global.

"In India, the top 1 per cent have grown their share of wealth by 62 per cent over this period (2000-2023); this figure is 54 per cent in China," the report said.

The report proposes the creation of an International Panel on Inequality (IPI), modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to monitor global trends and guide policymaking.

The body, to be launched under the South African G20 Presidency, would provide governments with "authoritative and accessible" data on inequality and its drivers. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

ChatGPT Go launches 1-year free access in India

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

OpenAI has launched its ChatGPT Go subscription service in India, now offering a year of free access to users who sign up during a limited-time promotional period. The promotion is currently available via the ChatGPT website and Google Play Store, with access from the Apple App Store to follow next week. ChatGPT Go, introduced earlier this year, provides Indian users with enhanced message limits, image generation, and file upload capabilities, as India ranks as ChatGPT's second-largest and one of the fastest-growing markets. "Since initially launching ChatGPT Go in India a few months ago, the adoption and creativity we've seen from our users has been inspiring," said Nick Turley, Vice President and Head of ChatGPT at OpenAI. *—PTI*

Gold declines by Rs 1,200 to Rs 1.24 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Gold prices plunged by Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,24,100 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global cues after comments from several US Federal Reserve officials dampened expectations of another rate cut next month. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,23,500 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes), extending its losses for the second straight session. It had settled at Rs 1,24,700 per 10g on Monday. In the local bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 1,25,300 per 10g in the previous market session. Silver also fell sharply by Rs 2,500 to Rs 1,51,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). Spot gold slipped by $7.84, or 0.2 per cent to $3,993.65 an ounce, while silver was trading nearly 1 per cent lower at $47.73 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee up by 11P, settles at 88.66 against USD

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

The rupee recovered from the record low level and settled with a gain of 11 paise at 88.66 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday boosted by falling crude oil prices overseas. Forex traders said a firm dollar, outflow of foreign funds and subdued domestic equity markets prevented a sharp gain in the Indian currency. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.55 and hit the intra-day high of 88.28 against the greenback. The unit also touched a low of 88.67 before ending the session at 88.66 (provisional) against the dollar. The foreign exchange markets will be closed on Wednesday on account of Prakash Gurpurb holiday. *—PTI*

Sebi Chief criticises MCX for ongoing outage issues

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

Following a recent outage at the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey expressed his dissatisfaction with "repeated" technical failures at exchanges. Speaking to reporters, Pandey stated, "The last problem was in July and now there is this (MCX). Repeated instances of such problems is not right." He confirmed that Sebi would analyse the issue and take corrective measures if necessary, while emphasising the need for market intermediaries to ensure operational resilience. Pandey highlighted the importance of cybersecurity, stating, "Firms must safeguard sensitive client data." He also touched on upcoming revised rules for stockbrokers, urging a culture of vigilance to maintain investor trust in the market. *—PTI*

Airtel to approach govt for AGR recalculation: MD

Airtel's move follows SC's favourable order in Vi's case

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Bharti Airtel will approach the government again, seeking relief in the adjusted gross revenue matter following a favourable order by the Supreme Court in the case of Vodafone Idea, a senior company official said.

The Supreme Court on Monday said the government can reconsider and reconcile the telecom company's pending dues of all adjusted gross revenue, and it will not be restricted to AGR dues for the 2016-17 financial year.

Adjusted gross revenue (AGR) is the income figure used to calculate licence fees and spectrum charges that telecom companies must pay to the government.

"We have always said the AGR judgment which you know we sought reviews on around calculation errors was something that you know having lost was a disappointment for us.

"So in that sense, we are pleased that this has been allowed for reconciliation by the court. We are now going to be taking it one step at a time," Bharti Airtel Vice-Chairman and MD Gopal Vittal said during the company's earnings call.

He was replying to a question seeking Bharti Airtel's stand on the apex court order.

Additional AGR dues of Vodafone Idea are to the tune of Rs 9,450 crore and the total AGR demand is over Rs 83,500 crore as of March 2025. *—PTI*

Bharti Airtel Vice-Chairman and MD Gopal Vittal PHOTO: AIRTEL

Groww IPO gets 57% subscription on day 1

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The initial public offering of Billionbrains Garage Ventures, the parent company of stock broking firm Groww, garnered 57 per cent subscription on the first day of the share sale on Tuesday.

The company's IPO received bids for 20,62,53,000 shares, as against 36,47,76,528 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE.

Retail investors' quota got fully subscribed, garnering 1.91 times subscription, while the category meant for non-institutional investors received 59 per cent subscription. The Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) part received 10 per cent subscription.

Billionbrains Garage Ventures on Monday garnered a little over Rs 2,984 crore from anchor investors.

The company's Rs 6,632 crore IPO would conclude on November 7.

The firm has fixed a price band of Rs 95-100 per share for its IPO, targeting a valuation of over Rs 61,700 crore (about USD 7 billion).

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,060 crore along with an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) component of 55.72 crore equity shares.

Additionally, Rs 167.5 crore will be infused into Groww Invest Tech Pvt Ltd (GIT) to fund its margin trading facility business, while Rs 152.5 crore has been earmarked to strengthen cloud infrastructure. The balance will be utilised for funding inorganic growth through acquisitions and for general corporate purposes. *—PTI*

SBI Q2 net profit jumps 6.84%

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

The State Bank of India (SBI) on Tuesday reported a 6.84 per cent jump in consolidated net for the September quarter at Rs 21,137 crore, helped by a gain of Rs 4,593 crore from its stake sale in Yes Bank.

The country's largest lender reported a 10 per cent increase in the July-September quarter to Rs 20,160 crore, up from Rs 18,331 crore in the year-ago period.

Its chairman, CS Setty, said the bank's overall business has touched Rs 100 lakh crore, and it is the 43rd-largest lender globally by assets.

Despite a 12.73 per cent growth in advances, its core net interest income grew by a muted 3.28 per cent to Rs 42,984 crore, limited by a 0.17 per cent compression in the net interest margin at 2.97 per cent.

Setty said the recent moves by policymakers, including the consumption-driven GST rationalisation, government changes to income tax slabs, and relaxations by the Reserve Bank, have prompted it to upwardly revise its FY26 credit growth target to 12-14 per cent from 11 per cent earlier.

The non-interest income jumped 30 per cent to Rs 19,919 crore on the back of the Yes Bank stake sale. *—PTI*

Fintech firm One **MobiKwik Systems** reported a widening of consolidated loss to Rs **28.6 crore** in the July-September quarter, with revenue declining marginally by **0.4 per cent.**

Airtel shares up 2%, hits 52-week high after Q2 earnings

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Shares of Bharti Airtel on Tuesday climbed nearly 2 per cent to reach the 52-week high after the firm reported over two-fold jump in consolidated net profit in September quarter of FY26.

The stock rallied 2.98 per cent to reach its 52-week high of Rs 2,112.90 on the BSE. At the NSE, the stock climbed 2.97 per cent to Rs 2,135.60 -- its 52-week peak.

Bharti Airtel on Monday reported over two-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 8,651 crore in September quarter of FY26, mainly on account of growth in high-paying smartphone customers and post-paid connections.

The company posted a profit of Rs 4,153.4 crore previous year. Bharti Airtel Africa too had posted multi-fold growth in net income at Rs 969 crore during the quarter. Revenue from operations of the firm rose by about 26 per cent to Rs 52,145 crore during the quarter. *—PTI*

Suzlon profit sees 539% surge in Q2

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Renewable energy solutions provider Suzlon's consolidated net profit witnessed a nearly six-fold jump of 539.08 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,279 crore in the September quarter of this financial year, compared to the year-ago period.

The firm has reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 200.60 crore for the quarter ended 30 September, 2024, it said.

Total income rose to Rs 3,897 crore in the second quarter of 2025-26.

"We have been entrusted with a record 6.2 GW orderbook by our customers. Our strategy of decoupling project development and project execution will drive execution volumes significantly," Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman, Suzlon Group, said. *—PTI*

IndiGo posts Rs 2,582 cr net loss in Q2

InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, on Tuesday reported a net loss of Rs 2,582.10 crore for the three months ended September, as the bottom line was mainly impacted by currency movements. The airline's loss in the year-ago period stood at Rs 986.7 crore. According to a regulatory filing, the company raked in a total income of Rs 19,599.5 crore in the second quarter of the current financial year, higher than Rs 17,759 crore recorded in the same period a year ago. *—PTI*

Mahindra Q2 profit after tax up by 28%

Mahindra & Mahindra on Tuesday posted a 28 per cent year-on-year increase in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 3,673 crore for the second quarter ended 30 September, 2025. The company reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 2,867 crore for the July-September period of the last fiscal. The firm said 28 per cent growth in PAT excludes one time gain on land sale in second quarter of FY25. Revenue rose to Rs 46,106 crore in the September quarter from Rs 37,924 crore in the year-ago, it said. *—PTI*

LENSKART'S IPO SUBSCIBED 28.26 TIMES

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

The initial public offer of eyewear retailer Lenskart Solutions Ltd received 28.26 times subscription on the final day of the share sale on Tuesday.

The Rs 7,278-crore IPO got bids for 281,88,45,629 shares against 9,97,61,257 shares on offer, according to NSE data.

Among the investor categories, the Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) quota fetched 40.35 times subscription. The category for non-institutional investors garnered 18.23 times subscription, while the portion for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) attracted 7.54 times subscription.

The firm has fixed a price band of Rs 382-402 per share for the IPO, targeting a valuation of over Rs 69,700 crore at the upper end.

Lenskart's public offering has a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 2,150 crore and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 12.75 crore equity shares by promoters and investors.

According to a BSE circular, the firm finalised the allocation of 8.13 crore equity shares to anchor investors. *—PTI*

Sensex tanks by 519 pts, Nifty falls below 25.6K

MUMBAI, 4 NOV

Benchmark Sensex tanked 519 points and broader Nifty settled below the 25,600 level on Tuesday due to profit-taking in utility, metal and IT shares triggered by weak global trends and foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 519.34 points, or 0.62 per cent, to settle at 83,459.15 with 25 of its constituents ending lower and five with gains. During the day, it tanked 565.72 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 83,412.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 165.70 points, or 0.64 per cent, to 25,597.65. It hit a low of 25,578.40 due to losses in bluechip shares such as PowerGrid, Eternal and Adani Enterprises.

Among Sensex firms, Power Grid fell the most by 3.13 per cent after the utility posted a decline in the September quarter profit. Eternal dropped 2.79 per cent, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle by 2.53 per cent, Tata Steel by 1.86 per cent, Maruti by 1.76 per cent and Bharat Electronics by 1.69 per cent.

However, Titan was the biggest gainer, rising by 2.28 per cent on strong Q2 financial results. A total of 2,549 stocks declined while 1,618 advanced and 162 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Stock markets would remain closed on Wednesday for Guru Nanak Jayanti. *—PTI*

Starbucks sells 60% stake in Chinese firm for $4B

SEATTLE, 4 NOV

Starbucks has announced a joint venture with Chinese investment firm Boyu Capital to operate its stores in China, with Boyu acquiring a 60 per cent stake in the retail operations for $4 billion. Starbucks will maintain a 40 per cent interest in the joint venture and will continue to own and license the Starbucks brand.

Having entered China nearly 30 years ago, Starbucks has played a significant role in cultivating the country's coffee culture. However, in recent years, the company has faced challenges due to rapid competition from local startups like Luckin Coffee, leading to declines in same-store sales for the past two fiscal years.

To facilitate growth, especially in smaller cities, Starbucks has sought a partner and evaluated about 20 offers for equity. CEO Brian Niccol expressed confidence in Boyu's local knowledge. The deal is expected to be finalised in the second quarter of Starbucks' 2026. *—PTI*

LARGEST PRODUCTION CAPACITY

China begins flying car trial before Tesla

BEIJING, 4 NOV

A Chinese firm this week began trial production of flying cars stated to be the next-generation in the world of transportation, ahead of US firm Tesla and others plans to launch the same shortly.

Xpeng Aeroht, the flying car affiliate of Chinese electric vehicle maker Xpeng on Monday began trial production at the world's first intelligent factory for mass-produced flying cars --- a milestone in the commercialisation of next-generation transport.

Located in the Huangpu district of Guangzhou, the capital of south China's Guangdong Province, the 1,20,000-square-metre plant has already rolled out the first detachable electric aircraft of its modular flying car, the "Land Aircraft Carrier", the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

PHOTO: X/@BRIANXPENG

The facility is designed to have an annual production capacity of 10,000 detachable aircraft modules, with an initial capacity of 5,000 units.

It has the largest production capacity of any factory of its kind, and will be capable of assembling one aircraft every 30 minutes once fully operational, the report said.

Xpeng announced the plan ahead of Tesla launching its flying car version.

Meanwhile, Tesla CEO Elon Musk told Fox News that his firm is getting closer to building a flying car. "We're getting close to demonstrating the prototype," Musk was quoted as saying on Monday.

The flying car comprises a six-wheel ground vehicle, referred to as the "mothership", and a detachable electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

Xepeng's eVTOL cars offer both automatic and manual flight modes. At about 5.5 metres in length, the vehicle can be driven on public roads with a standard licence and parked in regular spaces, the Xinhua report said. *—PTI*

Tesla a 'catfish' in China's EV 'tank'

Tesla, the first EV firm invited into China in 2018 to set up a standalone factory, ended up becoming the "catfish" that spurred the smaller players in China's EV sector. The "catfish effect" refers to when a strong competitor is introduced to push other firms to become more competitive. China used this to lure in Tesla with favourable terms and learn its technology. Soon China was supplying parts for Tesla vehicles, and before long, Chinese EV firms were producing their own models like never before, mimicking Tesla's features. *— Salar News*

Asia Cup skirmish: Rauf gets 2-match ban; Surya fined

DUBAI, 4 NOV

India's T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav and Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf have been fined for "bringing the game into disrepute" during the Asia Cup in September, with Rauf also receiving a two-ODI suspension after ac-cumulating four demerit points.

Rauf was fined 30 per cent of his match fee for two separate incidents in matches against India, including offensive plane-crash gestures mocking Indian military operations. With his four demerit points converting into two suspension points, he is barred from Pakistan's ongoing ODI series against South Africa, missing Tuesday's opener and the 6 November match.

Suryakumar was docked 30 per cent of his match fee for comments supporting the Indian armed forces and expressing solidarity with victims of the Pahalgam terror attack after the 14 September game.

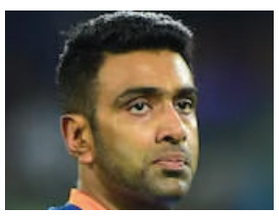
Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah also received a demerit point for making a "plane down" gesture after yorking Rauf in the final. Pakistan batter Sahibzada Farhan earned a demerit point for a mock gunfire celebration after scoring a fifty against India.

Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh faced scrutiny after a social media clip appeared to show him mocking Paki-stani fans during the Super 4 match on 21 September, but the ICC Match Referee ruled the act non-offensive. Tensions during the Asia Cup were high, with both teams declining to exchange handshakes. *—ANI*

Yamal becomes youngest FIFPRO World 11 pick

HOOFDROP, 4 NOV

Barcelona teenager Lamine Yamal has become the youngest player ever named in FIFPRO's Men's World 11, announced on Monday. The 18-year-old Spain winger earned 10,167 votes, second only to Gianluigi Donnarumma, who led with 13,609. FIFPRO's list, based on over 20,000 player votes, included five members of Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League-winning team Donnarumma, Ousmane Dembélé, Achraf Hakimi, Nuno Mendes, and Vitinha. Kylian Mbappé, previously the youngest player in 2018, made his sixth appearance, alongside Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham, Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk, Chelsea's Cole Palmer, and Barcelona's Pedri. 2025 FIFPRO Men's World 11: Donnarumma; Hakimi, Van Dijk, Mendes; Vitinha, Pedri, Bellingham, Palmer; Yamal, Mbappé, Dembélé. *—PTI*



Ashwin ruled out of BBL15 due to knee injury

CHENNAI, 4 NOV

Former India cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin's debut in the Big Bash League has been delayed as he has been ruled out of Sydney Thunder's entire season due to a knee injury. Having retired from international cricket last year, Ashwin said on Instagram, "While training in Chennai, I hurt my knee... I'll miss BBL15." Following a medical procedure, he will focus on rehabilitation and hopes to return later in the season to support the team. Thunder GM Trent Copeland expressed the team's devastation, stating, "His commitment to Thunder was clear. We wish him well in his recovery and hope to welcome him during the season." *—PTI*

Mandhana loses top rank in ICC rankings to Wolvaardt

Smriti Mandhana ***PHOTO: PTI***

DUBAI, 4 NOV

Smriti Mandhana slipped to second in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings, while teammate Jemimah Rodrigues broke into the top 10 after India's title-winning World Cup campaign. South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt climbed two places to No.1, her back-to-back hundreds in the semifinal and final powering her to a record 571 runs, the most in a single edition, and a career-best 814 rating points.

Mandhana, who dominated the rankings through the tournament, finished with 434 runs and was named in the ICC Team of the Tournament alongside Rodrigues and Player of the Tournament Deepti Sharma. India defeated South Africa by 52 runs in Sunday's final.

Rodrigues, whose unbeaten 127 in the semifinal against Australia proved decisive, rose nine spots to No.10. Australia's Phoebe Litchfield jumped 13 spots to 13th following her century in the same match, while Ellyse Perry moved to seventh, tied with retiring New Zealand great Sophie Devine. India captain Harmanpreet Kaur climbed to 14th.

In the bowling charts, South Africa's Marizanne Kapp moved to second after her 5/20 against England, closing in on top-ranked Sophie Ecclestone. Australians Annabel Sutherland and Kim Garth made minor gains. Deepti, with 22 wickets and 215 runs including 5/39 in the final, rose to fourth among all-rounders.

The ICC Women's World Cup Team of the Tournament, unveiled on Tuesday, features three Indians. Mandhana, Rodrigues and Deepti were rewarded for their consistency in India's maiden title run. South Africa also have three representatives, with Wolvaardt appointed captain.

Australia contributed Sutherland, Ash Gardner and leg-spinner Alana King, while Pakistan's Sidra Nawaz was picked as wicketkeeper, the only player from outside the semifinals. England's Ecclestone made the XI, with Nat Sciver-Brunt named 12th player.

Mandhana's century against New Zealand and a string of strong scores underpinned India's campaign, while Rodrigues provided stability at No.3 with key knocks, including 76* against New Zealand and a handy 24 in the final. Deepti's all-round impact, a century, multiple fifties and tournament-leading wickets cemented her place as India's most influential performer.

ICC Women's World Cup Team of the Tournament:

Mandhana (Ind), Wolvaardt (c) (SA), Rodrigues (Ind), Kapp (SA), Gardner (Aus), Deepti (Ind), Sutherland (Aus), de Klerk (SA), Nawaz (wk) (Pak), King (Aus), Ecclestone (Eng). 12th player: Sciver-Brunt (Eng). *—PTI*

WORDS of WISDOM

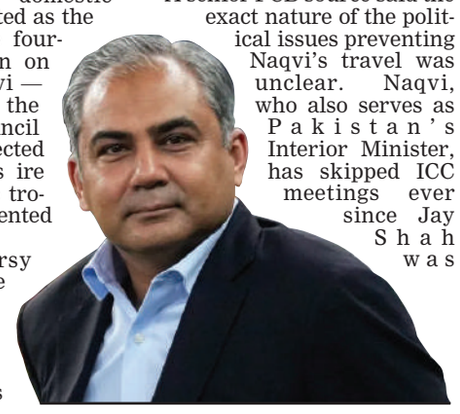
> I was dreaming, when will I wear this blue jersey? So I think this means a lot to me, a young girl who didn't know about women's cricket, but still dreamt, that one day, I want to bring that change in our country. And I think, it all shows that you should never stop dreaming. You never know where your destiny will take you. You never think, when will it happen, how will it happen. You only think, this will happen

—HARMANPREET KAUR, Indian captain

Naqvi may skip ICC meeting over Asia Cup Trophy row

KARACHI, 4 NOV

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is unlikely to attend the ongoing ICC Executive Board meeting in Dubai, with "domestic political issues" cited as the main hurdle. The four-day meeting began on Tuesday, and Naqvi — who also heads the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) — was expected to face the BCCI's ire over the Asia Cup trophy not being presented to India.



The controversy erupted after the Indian players reportedly refused to accept the trophy from Naqvi following his anti-India remarks. Since then, the Asia Cup silverware has remained locked in the ACC headquarters in Dubai, despite the final being played in late September.

A senior PCB source said the exact nature of the political issues preventing Naqvi's travel was unclear. Naqvi, who also serves as Pakistan's Interior Minister, has skipped ICC meetings ever since Jay Shah was elected chairman of the world body last year.

In his absence, PCB Chief Operating Officer Sumair Syed will attend the ICC chief executives' meeting, and may also represent Pakistan at the key board meeting on 7 November. There remains a possibility, however, of Naqvi joining remotely.

The PCB source added that Naqvi had personally ordered the trophy to be stored in Dubai and directed ACC staff not to move it without his approval. While the BCCI has written to the ACC requesting that the trophy be sent to Mumbai, Naqvi has insisted he will hand it over himself to a BCCI representative and an Indian team member at a ceremony in Dubai on 10 November. *—PTI*

Elena Rybakina stuns Swiatek to reach WTA Finals

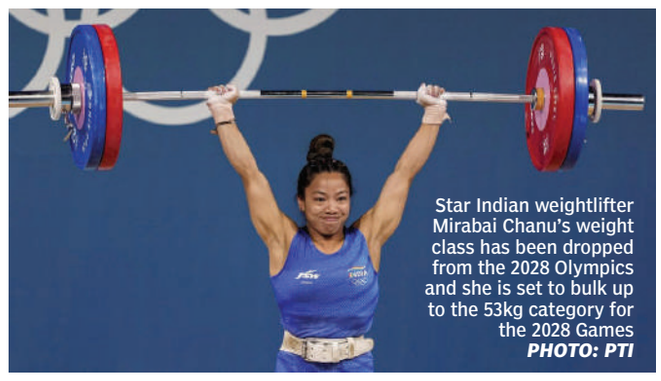
RIYADH, 4 NOV

Elena Rybakina reached the WTA Finals for the first time after a dramatic comeback against Iga Swiatek, winning 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 on Monday. This victory, coupled with Amanda Anisimova's win over Madison Keys, sets up a decisive match between Swiatek and Anisimova on Wednesday for a spot in the semifinals.

Previously, Swiatek dominated Anisimova in the Wimbledon final with a stunning score of 6-0, 6-0. However, Anisimova exacted revenge in the US Open quarterfinals, defeating Swiatek 6-4, 6-3. With a 0-2 record, Australian Open champion Keys has been eliminated from contention.

Rybakina, currently ranked No. 6, advanced past the round-robin stage for the first time in her third appearance at the WTA Finals. Her recent form has been outstanding, winning eight straight matches and 10 of her last 11. After struggling initially against the No. 2-ranked Swiatek, Rybakina found her rhythm, serving better as Swiatek faltered. The Polish player, who made six unforced errors in the first set, accumulated a staggering 36 in the final two sets.

In the other match, No. 4 Anisimova broke No. 7 Keys six times to secure a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory. *—ANI*



Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu's weight class has been dropped from the 2028 Olympics and she is set to bulk up to the 53kg category for the 2028 Games ***PHOTO: PTI***

Mirabai's weight class axed from Olympics

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu will have to move up to the 53kg category for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics after her current division was removed from the Games. Chanu, who won silver in the 49kg at the Tokyo Olympics, faces the shift following the IOC's decision to expand weightlifting to 12 events, with 53kg now the lowest women's category.

Chief national coach Vijay Sharma said the change could benefit the 31-year-old, noting that cutting weight to 48kg had been physically taxing. Chanu will, however, continue competing in her present class until the Asian Games next year.

The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) said late Monday that the IOC's expansion for LA28 had prompted a revised set of Olympic categories. This marks the second category overhaul within a year. Earlier in 2024, Chanu switched to 48kg after 49kg was dropped from the Olympics; though reinstated for IWF events such as the World Championships, it will not return for the Games.

Chanu has enjoyed strong results this season, winning gold at Commonwealth Championships and silver at World Championships in the 48kg category. After next year's Asian Games, she will have a two-year window to move up to 53kg, allowing her to build more muscle mass.

The women's Olympic categories for LA28 are 53kg, 61kg, 69kg, 77kg, 86kg and +86kg. Men will compete in 65kg, 75kg, 85kg, 95kg, 110kg and +110kg. The Olympic divisions form part of a new set of 16 IWF bodyweight categories that will take effect from 1 August 2026, following approval by the IWF Executive Board and ratification by the Athletes Commission. *—PTI*

FIFA junks Malaysia's plea on fake player docu

ZURICH, 4 NOV

FIFA has dismissed appeals lodged by the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) and seven foreign-born players who were banned for using falsified documents to claim eligibility for the national team.

The world governing body confirmed on Monday that its appeals committee upheld a fine of 350,000 Swiss francs (£380,000) against the FAM and one-year bans for the players involved. Originating from Argentina, Brazil, the Netherlands and Spain, the players were naturalised in apparent breach of FIFA rules and featured in Malaysia's 4–0 victory over Vietnam during a 2027 Asian Cup qualifier in June.

FAM had claimed that all seven players qualified through Malaysian-born grandparents, making them eligible under FIFA's heritage rules.

However, FIFA investigators found discrepancies after securing original records from the players' home countries, which contradicted the federation's claims.

Malaysia now has one month to decide whether to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. In response to the scandal, FAM has suspended its secretary general, Noor Azman Rahman, and launched an internal investigation into the matter.

The controversy comes as a major embarrassment for Malaysian football, especially given that former FAM president Hamidin bin Haji Mohd Amin currently serves on the influential 37-member FIFA Council. *—PTI*

Malaysia's players pose before the start of the AFC Asian Cup qualifier Group F soccer match between Malaysia and Vietnam at the National Stadium Bukit Jalil in Kuaa Lumpur Malaysia ***PHOTO: X***

Ranji Trophy: Vidarbha's Yash overtakes Hazare

COIMBATORE, 4 NOV

Vidarbha's remarkable batter Yash Rathod continued his stellar form in the Ranji Trophy with a stunning century against Tamil Nadu in Round 3. With this performance, Rathod has surpassed Vijay Hazare and Vinod Kambli to achieve a significant milestone for the highest first-class average among Indian batters with at least 2,000 runs.

Playing at the Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts and Science Ground in Coimbatore, Rathod took to the crease following solid contributions from Aman Mokhade (80), Dhruv Shorey (82), and R Samarth (56), leading Vidarbha to a strong position. He reached a half-century in just 61 balls, ultimately scoring 133 runs, marking his ninth first-class century.

Currently, Rathod has 2,280 runs under his belt with an average of 60 ***PHOTO: YASHRATHOD_23***

With a total of 2,280 runs and an average of 60, Rathod holds the sixth-highest first-class average for any Indian player with over 2,000 runs, surpassing Hazare (58.38) and Kambli (59.67), as noted by Wisden. Notably, he is the only player among the twelve who have achieved an average of 60 or more without scoring a double century.

This season, Rathod has amassed 775 runs in seven matches at an astonishing average of 110.7, further building on his impressive tally of 960 runs as last season's top run-scorer in the Ranji Trophy. *—ANI*

STAR IN THE MAKING

Dravid's son to play U19 One-Day Trophy

NEW DELHI, 4 NOV

Anvay Dravid, son of Indian cricket icon and current head coach Rahul Dravid, has been named in one of the four squads for the Men's U19 One-Day Challenger Trophy, which begins in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

A promising top-order batter and wicketkeeper, the teenager will represent Team C in the annual tournament organised by the BCCI. The competition provides a vital platform for India's best young cricketers to display their talent and stake a claim for future national selection.

Anvay, known for his aggressive batting style, is the younger brother of Samit Dravid, who has featured in the Maharaja T20 KSCA Trophy as a top-order batter. His inclusion adds to the growing cricketing legacy of the Dravid family.

Rahul Dravid and his younger son Anvay ***PHOTO: X***

- Anvay Dravid, known for his aggressive batting style, is the younger brother of Samit Dravid, who has featured in the Maharaja T20 KSCA Trophy as a top-order batter

According to a BCCI statement, "The Junior Selection Committee has picked the teams for the upcoming IDFC First Bank Men's U19 One-Day Challenger Trophy to be played in Hyderabad from 5th to 11 November, 2025."

Team C, captained by Aaron George with Aaryan Yadav as vice-captain, will open its campaign against Team B, led by Vedant Trivedi, on Friday. The other two sides in the competition are Team A, headed by Vihaan Malhotra, and Team D, captained by Chandrahas Dash. The week-long tournament is expected to showcase some of India's finest under-19 talent, offering a glimpse into the country's cricketing future. *—PTI*